Evaluation of the Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research

FINAL REPORT

Submitted to:

Saskatchewan Advanced Education, Employment and Labour and
Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research

EKOS RESEARCH ASSOCIATES INC.

May 6, 2008

Ottawa Office
359 Kent Street, Suite 300
Ottawa, Ontario
K2P 0R6
Tel: (613) 235 7215
Fax: (613) 235 8498
E-mail: pobox@ekos.com

Toronto Office
480 University Avenue, Suite 1006
Toronto, Ontario
M5G 1V2
Tel: (416) 598 8002
Fax: (416) 598 2543
E-mail: toronto@ekos.com

Edmonton Office
9925 109th St. NW, Suite 606
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 2J8
Tel: (780) 408 5225
Fax: (780) 408 5233
E-mail: edmonton@ekos.com

www.ekos.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary iii

1. Introduction 1

1.1 Background 1
1.2 Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research 1
1.3 Profile of Participants 7
1.4 Review Objectives and Issues 8
1.5 Methodology 9
1.6 Caveats 11
1.7 Organization of the Report 11

2. Participant Profile 13

2.1 Socio-Demographic Profile 13
2.2 Pre-Program Work Experience Profile 14

3. Rationale 17

3.1 Need for Programming 17
3.2 Overlap and Duplication 20

4. Design and Delivery 23

4.1 Program Array 23
4.2 Cultural Affirmation and Resources 25
4.3 Student Supports 26
4.4 Awareness of GDI Programs 28
4.5 Partnerships 30
4.6 Governance 34
4.7 Funding 39

5. Program Impacts 41

5.1 Motivation to Enrol 41
5.2 Program Satisfaction 43
5.3 Discontinuation Rate 44
5.4 Perceived Benefits of the GDI Program 45
5.5 Employment Outcomes 46
5.6 Faculty and Staff Perspective 53
5.7 Unanticipated Impacts 54
5.8 Role of GDI in the Métis Community 54

6. Strengths and Challenges 57

6.1 Strengths 57
6.2 Challenges/Suggestions for Improvement 59

7. Summary Observations 65

7.1 Rationale 65
7.2 Design and Delivery 66
7.3 Program Impacts 68
7.4 Strengths and Challenges 69

APPENDIX A: Evaluation Questions

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In operation for 27 years, the Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research (GDI) was established in Saskatchewan with a mandate to promote Métis culture through development and distribution of relevant materials and collections, and to deliver Métis-specific educational programs and services. In order to examine the rationale, design and delivery, and program and cultural outcomes of GDI, the Saskatchewan Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour (AEEL) and GDI have commissioned an evaluation of the Institute. This evaluation will focus on a sub-set of GDI activities – specifically, the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP), the Publishing Department and the Dumont Technical Institute (DTI), including Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Skills Training.

The objective of this research is to review the selected GDI programs for the purpose of assessing the rationale, design and delivery, effectiveness and impacts for the period between September 1, 2004 and June 30, 2007. The evaluation issues fall into four categories: rationale; delivery and design; impacts and effects; and alternatives.

The study's methodological approach involved four components:

- ***Review of Documents, Administrative Data and Literature***. The purpose of this component was to understand the design and delivery of GDI programs and, using program administrative data, develop a profile of participants and program operations. A review of literature was conducted to examine best practices in Aboriginal post-secondary education.
- ***Key Informant Interviews***. In total, 20 interviews were conducted with GDI staff, government officials, board members, and external partners to gather their opinions and observations on the evaluation questions.
- ***Survey of DTI and SUNTEP participants***. A telephone survey of 165 DTI ABE and Skills Training and SUNTEP participants was conducted. The survey explored participants' satisfaction with their program, and their employment and education experiences since finishing their program. Owing to a high level of sampling attrition due to invalid contact information, the response rate to the survey was quite low at 19 per cent. Results have a margin of error of 11 to 13 per cent (depending on the program group) at the 95 per cent confidence interval (i.e., 19 times out of 20).
- ***Survey of Staff***. A telephone survey was conducted with 43 GDI faculty and staff to obtain their views on program relevance, delivery and impacts. The response rate for the survey was 67 per cent. Results have a margin of error of eight per cent at the 95 per cent confidence interval (i.e., 19 times out of 20).

RATIONALE

GDI was established in 1980, with the SUNTEP program coming into being at that time, as well as a commitment to conduct Métis cultural research. This was followed later by the establishment of DTI (1992) to deliver ABE and Skills Training to Métis students across the province. GDI is the only Métis-owned and directed educational institution in Canada. Evaluation study participants – key informants, and faculty and staff – were supportive of the ongoing need for GDI programs, including the SUNTEP, DTI and Publishing Department which were the focus of the study.

Current demographic and economic conditions in Saskatchewan further support the relevance of programming to advance Métis education and employment. The province's Métis population is growing and is also relatively young. Métis people do not fare well on measures of education, employment and income compared to the non-Aboriginal population in Saskatchewan. As a province currently experiencing labour shortages in many skill areas, the potential of Saskatchewan's Aboriginal workforce to meet labour market demand and also to benefit from economic prosperity has become a priority.

Mainstream institutions are not perceived by key informants to be the ideal setting for success for many in the Métis community and this is confirmed in the literature on best practices in Aboriginal education and learning. GDI's programs such as through DTI and SUNTEP offer a distinctive and welcoming approach to basic and post-secondary education that includes both sound substantive content (DTI's certificate and diploma training, SUNTEP's Bachelor of Education degree), with a cultural component that is widely perceived to contribute to student retention and success ("a program plus," according to several key informants). According to key informants, GDI has consolidated its role in the Métis community, and gained credibility as a long-standing educational institution.

Faculty and staff also support the relevance of GDI's offerings as meeting the needs and interests of Métis learners. While participants themselves were not asked about the relevance of their program to their needs and interests directly, the survey data generally point to satisfaction with the program offerings and supports, though a minority expressed a desire for more intensive programs or greater diversity in programs.

The majority of key informants and GDI faculty and staff expressed few concerns about program overlap or duplication between programs offered by GDI/DTI and other training providers in the province. While ABE programming, and certificate and diploma training are delivered by a number of institutions, GDI programs are noted to have a number of distinguishing features that meet the needs and interests of their particular constituency.

A challenge for DTI is balancing the necessity to meet labour market needs and fulfill its provincial mandate within its current resources. The two directions selected by the Institute in its current strategic plan – health-related occupations and trades type training – appear to be sensible given labour market demand (though this issue was not examined to any great extent in the evaluation), but these are also expensive programs to deliver. ABE programming also consumes a substantial portion of resources. It

can be difficult for the Institute to have a significant presence in all 12 Métis Nation—Saskatchewan (MN—S) Regions (mostly achieved through the delivery of ABE programs in all regions) and therefore partnerships are critical to GDI's operations, particularly the delivery of trades training. There is also a challenge in drawing men to the programs – there is an overrepresentation of women among program participants – not only for SUNTEP which is consistent with the elementary teacher emphasis, but also among DTI ABE participants. Greater participation of women in DTI and SUNTEP parallels broader trends in Aboriginal education.

DESIGN AND DELIVERY

Evaluation study participants were generally satisfied with GDI's current approach to training and education programming and the distinctive design features were perceived to contribute to access, and retention and success of students. The culturally-affirming environment and integration of Métis-specific programming emerge as vitally important thrusts of the Institute and an area where GDI with the support of its Publishing Department has been quite effective. Many key informants feel that the safe and welcoming environment at GDI draws students to the Institute who would not otherwise participate in mainstream institutions and thus addresses what participants themselves identify as a key barrier to achieving their goals – lack of educational qualifications/grade 12. The culturally-affirming atmosphere was also an aspect of their program with which GDI participants were very satisfied (eight in ten) and where the perceived benefits of the program are high (eight in ten rated the program very useful in increasing their sense of pride in being Métis).

Accredited training, community-based delivery of training, small class sizes and, to a lesser extent, preparatory training were also noted as positive features of GDI programs by key informants, which lend themselves to providing individual attention to students and flexibility in addressing their needs.

If there is a design feature that merits further attention, it is the support services to students attending programs. The existing supports to students are perceived to be an important factor of success by key informants, though there are delivery challenges in that much programming occurs in communities across the province. The survey data show that a modest portion of students took advantage of support services such as counselling and referrals during their studies (lowest among DTI Skills Training participants) and this area also received a comparatively lower satisfaction rating in the battery of program attributes. When asked whether there were any gaps in the Institute's current program array, key informant, and faculty and staff comments frequently centred on enhancing student support services, recognizing that this is also a resource issue.

Awareness of GDI programs is perceived by key informants, and faculty and staff to be moderate to high. GDI uses a number of different methods to promote awareness of the Institute and its programs such as Métis Locals and the media. According to participants in GDI programs, word of mouth is the most commonly mentioned source of awareness of their program, particularly among SUNTEP participants. Media ads are a distant second. Seven in ten participants were very satisfied with how easy it

was to find out about and apply to DTI/SUNTEP – rated near the middle in a battery of program attributes. Awareness is an area that was perceived as needing modest improvement by key informants and the issue has received some attention in the Institute's strategic planning sessions as well.

GDI works in collaboration with a number of other government departments and agencies and educational institutions. On the whole, these partnerships – with AEEL, the province's two universities and SIAST – were characterized by key informants as collegial and beneficial. Faculty and staff ratings of these partnerships were also consistent. With respect to the regional colleges, DTI has partnered with some colleges more than others and some not at all. Though much depends on the concentration of the Métis population and their participation in programming, GDI's perspective is that issues around "turf" and control may also be at play. Partnerships with employers is an area where some key informants felt GDI could expand its efforts. There have been some successes partnering with government departments and Crown Corporations, but according to these key informants, partnerships could be extended to other sectors, and existing partnerships (e.g., with school boards, health regions) solidified. In fact, the smaller size of the Institute was perceived to lend itself well to providing a rapid and flexible response to employer needs and the current tight labour market offers a positive climate for these partnerships to be initiated.

Governance of the Institute is seen to have advanced considerably in the last two years. During this time, the role of the Board of Governors has evolved from a management board to a policy board, now supported by a number of bylaws around succession planning, conflict of interest and so on. Board members have attended a number of professional development sessions to better understand their roles and responsibilities. Key informants were generally pleased with the current operation and effectiveness of the Board. Where improvements were suggested, these had to do with greater precision and consistency in the way Board members are solicited and selected (e.g., qualifications of Board members, checks and balances).

The relationship between the MN—S and GDI is articulated in the Institute's bylaws. The link is perceived to be an important one. The timing of the evaluation data collection coincided with an MN—S proposal that would see GDI move from affiliate status to a subsidiary of the MN—S. There was little support for the proposal among the key informants who participated in the study, or surveyed GDI faculty and staff. This is an issue of timing (the current government viewed as lacking an entrenched and effective governance model, experience and stability, and thus a discussion of a change in the relationship being premature) and principle (training and education institutions needing to have governance that is autonomous from political bodies). Some argued that the MN—S has an important role to play at the political level as an advocate for GDI and Métis participation in education and employment generally.

Among GDI representatives, and faculty and staff, the Institute's funding is perceived to be only somewhat adequate to meet the needs of students and to fulfill GDI's provincial mandate. Insufficient operational funding for DTI (in ratio to training program funding and compared to regional colleges) is a particular bone of contention for the Institute. Evaluation participants were of the view that while GDI is making effective use of its current resources, more could be done to address other learner interests, student supports and cultural activities.

PROGRAM IMPACTS

DTI and SUNTEP participants are generally pleased with their experience in their program – eight in ten say they were very satisfied with their program overall. As mentioned above, the program attributes that received the highest satisfaction rating were the culturally-affirming environment, and also the quality of the training. The vast majority would choose the same program if they were to do it over again and almost all would recommend DTI/SUNTEP to a friend or family member.

Program discontinuation rates are higher for DTI ABE programs compared to the certificate and diploma training programs and SUNTEP – 34 per cent compared to 11 and 10 per cent for DTI Skills Training and SUNTEP respectively. The most common reason for discontinuing their program, according to participants, was for family/personal/health reasons.

Participants perceived there to be a number of benefits of their DTI/SUNTEP program including cultural pride and knowledge, motivation and self-confidence and gaining skills and knowledge for the workplace. Their programs' usefulness in terms of improving their ability to find and keep a job was rated somewhat less useful (and the transition to the workplace was also an area that some key informants mentioned could be a focus for further student support services).

Employment outcomes vary significantly by program – a reflection of the content of the course (upgrading vs. skills/teaching training) and ABE participants being a more complex and multi-barriered client group. About half of DTI ABE graduates have worked (full-time, part-time, self-employed or casual) since completing their program and two in five were working at the time of the survey. However, a substantial proportion – one in three are currently students. The unemployment rate in this group is 26 per cent. While a large majority of DTI certificate and diploma training graduates – over eight in ten – have worked since completing their program, about seven in ten are currently working and two in ten are currently unemployed and looking for work. SUNTEP graduates have the most positive employment outcomes – eight in ten are currently working and most of the remainder are students (four per cent unemployed and looking for work). It should be noted that the survey sample may not be perfectly generalizable to the participant population as a whole, given the modest response rate.

Job quality seems to have improved modestly compared to the pre-program period, with graduates more likely to be employed in higher paying jobs. Wage gains range from $11 an hour for SUNTEP participants to $3 an hour for DTI Skills Training participants. The majority of graduates say that their current job is related to their DTI/SUNTEP program and most say the program was helpful in getting this job to at least some extent. Nineteen per cent are working in positions with little relationship to their DTI/SUNTEP program. One in five program participants went on to other education and training at various institutions in the province following their program. Impacts on work intensity and draw on social assistance are difficult to detect given the small sample size.

STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

Evaluation participants identified many strengths of GDI. The cultural component drew particular praise, as well as the quality and dedication of staff and Board members. Other strengths included aspects of the program model such as student supports, community-based delivery of training, flexibility and responsiveness and credibility of the Institute.

The most important reported challenge of the Institute is funding, which impacts an array of issues from sufficient programming to meet the needs of Métis learners and current students to facility issues to the ability of the Institute to operate smoothly and strategically and attract high quality staff. In terms of its programming, GDI was perceived to offer a generally sound spectrum of programs and services given its resources. There are some challenges in terms of gaps in programs and services, however, as well as a desire by some to expand the cultural education component. Governance of the Institute is perceived to be both a strength and a challenge—while recognizing that the Institute has made significant strides in this area, key informants recommended continued attention and vigilance in this area. While there was a high degree of confidence in the management at GDI, there were also some organizational challenges that were mentioned (e.g., internal communications) — also linked to funding constraints and the recent and rapid growth of the Institute following signing of the AHRDA. There is also a need and desire for additional management supports such as a student information system. Finally, there were some additional suggestions to further efforts in the area of marketing solidify and expand partnerships.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

In operation for 27 years, the Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research (GDI) was established in Saskatchewan with a mandate to promote Métis culture through development and distribution of relevant materials and collections, and to deliver Métis-specific educational programs and services. In order to examine GDI's rationale, design and delivery, and program and cultural outcomes, the Saskatchewan Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour (AEEL) and GDI have commissioned an evaluation of the Institute. This evaluation will focus on a sub-set of GDI activities—specifically, the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP), the Publishing Department and the Dumont Technical Institute (DTI), including Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Skills Training. This *Revised Draft Final Report* presents findings from the evaluation.

1.2 GABRIEL DUMONT INSTITUTE OF NATIVE STUDIES AND APPLIED RESEARCH

a) History

GDI was created in 1980 by members of the Association of Métis and Non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan. The creation of GDI is the end result of planning initiated at the Métis Cultural Conference in 1976 and its stated mission is:

> *To promote the renewal and development of Métis culture through research, materials development, collection and the distribution of those materials and the design, development and delivery of Métis-specific educational programs and services.*[1]

The Institute is unique in Canada in providing a Métis-directed educational and cultural experience for students. Since its inception, GDI has evolved from an institution focused primarily on cultural education and renewal to include a dual focus on employment training and cultural education. Distinguishing features of GDI programming include:

- Programs are, for the most part, community based;

[1] Annual Report 2005.

- Many programs offer a preparatory phase of training or run concurrent update courses with regular programming when the course begins;
- All courses offer Métis Studies programming and are sensitive to Métis culture;
- Programs provide comprehensive academic and personal counselling support to students;
- Whenever possible, an applied practicum phase is included as an integral part of all programs;
- All training and professional education is fully accredited and recognized; and
- Instruction and programming is of the highest quality.[2]

With respect to the three programs under study, GDI's revenue approximately $7.7 million in 2006-07, comprised of operating grants, program funding, tuition fees, investment income, and other sources. However, the main funding source, about 70 per cent, is the provincial government. Provincial funds are administered by AEEL under a Grants Agreement under the authority of *The Department of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training Act, 2000*. Because GDI is an affiliate, and not a subsidiary of the Métis Nation—Saskatchewan (MN—S), funds are allocated directly to GDI. Recently, GDI signed a $22.1 million agreement with the federal government under the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreement (2007). This agreement was signed in 2006 to establish a new training and employment arm called GDI Training and Employment.

b) GDI's Organization

GDI is an affiliate of and the official educational affiliate of the MN—S. GDI is structured as a parent company that owns five incorporated, non-profit companies:

- Dumont Technical Institute (DTI)
- Community Training Residence (CTR)
- GDI Scholarship Foundation
- Gabriel Dumont College (GDC)
- GDI Training and Employment Services

These companies are governed by a Board of Governors (BoG) that, along with overseeing the operation of these subsidiaries, is responsible for the development of GDI policies and programs; the development and approval of programs; and GDI's strategic direction. The BoG is comprised of 12 representatives from each of the 12 MN—S Regions of the province, plus an elected official from the MN—S (Minister of Education).

---

[2] http://www.gdins.org/AboutGDI.shtml

GDI is affiliated with the University of Saskatchewan and University of Regina for the purpose of delivering the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP) program, while DTI is academically federated with the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST). The DTI-SIAST Federation Agreement, originally signed in 1994 and renewed in 2000 and again in 2006, provides a foundation for collaborative planning, and facilitates the delivery of SIAST certificate and diploma programs by DTI to Métis people. DTI also enters into partnerships with Regional Colleges and the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology (SIIT) for delivery of selected programs.

c) Programs and Services

The main programs and services offered by the GDI include[3]:

- SUNTEP
- Gabriel Dumont College (GDC)
- DTI
- GDI Training & Employment
- Library Information Services
- Publishing Department
- Finance and Administration

Of these programs, the three components that are the subject of this evaluation are the DTI, SUNTEP, and the Publishing Department.

DTI

DTI is a unique institution which was established in 1992 and serves the educational and Skills Training needs of the province's Métis through the provision of community-based adult upgrading and Skills Training programs. It is the upgrading and training arm of GDI, and is GDI's largest component. In the interest of promoting strong, independent individuals and communities with the ultimate goal of self governance, DTI's mission is to deliver courses and provides quality educational opportunities for Métis people in Saskatchewan.[4]

DTI offers Basic Education programming at sites throughout the province. DTI delivers the Adult Basic Education (ABE) 10 and Adult 12 programs. Many Skills Training programs are community-based and are scheduled based on community need and interest. Training in the health professions and

[3] http://www.gdins.org/programstableofcontents.shtml.

[4] http://www.gdins.org/DTI.shtml

trades training has been a focus for DTI. The Institute's strategic plan identifies a new focus over the next five years on apprenticeship-type training, and enhanced basic education programming.

Certificate and diploma programs offered during the 2004/05-2006/07 years are listed below.

	Location
Program—2004-05	
Pre-Trade Carpentry	Batoche/Prince Albert
Practical Nursing	Prince Albert, Meadow Lake, Saskatoon
Youth Care Worker Certificate program	Meadow Lake
Tourism	Nipawin
Economic Development program	La Ronge
Heavy Equipment Operator	Cumberland House
Autobody Repair	Saskatoon
Media Production – Set Safety and Set Protocol	La Ronge
1A Truck Driver Training	Prince Albert
Home Care/Special Care Aide	St. Louis
Program— 2005-06	
Pre-Trade Carpentry	Meadow Lake, Nipawin
Practical Nursing	Prince Albert, Meadow Lake, Saskatoon, Prince Albert
Power Engineering	Buffalo Narrows
Youth Care Worker Year 1	Meadow Lake
Business Planning Applied Certificate	La Ronge
Heavy Equipment Operator	Cumberland House, Regina
1A Truck Driver	Willow Bunch, Moose Jaw, Meadow Lake
Program— 2006-07	
Youth Care Worker Year 2	Meadow Lake
Practical Nursing	Prince Albert, Saskatoon
Power Engineering	Buffalo Narrows
Continuing Care Aide	La Loche
Heavy Equipment Operator	Buffalo Narrows
Management Studies	Ile-a-la-Crosse
1A Truck Driver Training	North Battleford, Ft. Qu'Appelle
Oilfield Safety	Prince Albert, Willow Bunch, Green Lake, Moose Jaw
Pre-employment Electrician	Saskatoon
Introduction to Welding	Saskatoon
SaskEnergy Job Readiness	Saskatoon
Brick Layer/Masonry	Cumberland House
Job Readiness/Safety Training	Yorkton
Employment Counsellor Training	Watrous

During the 2005-06 year there were over 500 enrollments at DTI, and 40 staff members. Enrollments increased to 569 in 2006-0. A profile of program participation includes:

Program	Number Enrolled	Number Completed/Graduated	Graduation/Completion as a Percentage of Enrolment
2005-06			
Basic Education program (credit)*	358	221	62
Basic Education (non-credit)**	32	32	100
Skills Training***	129****	99	77
Total	519	352	68
2006-07			
Basic Education program (credit)*	358	218	61
Basic Education (non-credit)**	10	8	80
Skills Training***	201	165	82
Total	569	391	69

Source: *GDI Operational Highlights, 2005-6*
*Includes Literacy training, BE 5-10; Adult 12, GED, GED/Work Skills
**Includes preparatory courses
***Includes 15 credit programs
****Excludes enrolled with completion dates beyond fiscal year

SUNTEP

Established in 1980, SUNTEP is a four-year, fully accredited Bachelor of Education program, offered by GDI in cooperation with AEEL, the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan. The primary goals of the program are:

- To ensure that Métis are well prepared to fill their just share of teaching positions in the province; and
- To ensure that SUNTEP graduates are educated to be sensitive to the individual educational needs of all students and Métis and First Nations students in particular.[5]

SUNTEP is unique. It includes Native Studies and cross-cultural education with an emphasis on Métis and First Nations history and culture. In addition to academic education, there is also a field work component spent with teachers and students in urban schools. The program has three satellite locations in Saskatoon, Regina, and Prince Albert.

Students' tuition and course costs are covered by the program. Potential participants apply directly to SUNTEP (regular university admission requirements or adult special admission requirements apply). The process involves completion of an application form (including references and a handwritten

[5] http://www.gdins.org/GDIProgramsandServices.shtml#suntep

submission) and a screening interview to verify desire and interest in the program and ability to commit (i.e., personal supports and financing are in place). Since the program's inception, 837 students have graduated from SUNTEP.

In 2005/06, there were 217 students enrolled in SUNTEP across the four academic years of the program and including the Prince Albert, Saskatoon and Regina locations. Withdrawals from the program are uncommon.

Program	Number Enrolled				Number who Discontinued/Withdrew
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	
Prince Albert	16	28	25	22	1
Saskatoon	20	17	19	15	4
Regina	16	15	15	9	5
Total	52	60	59	46	10

Source: GDI Operational Highlights, 2005-6

Publishing Department

GDI's Publishing Department was established in 1985. Located in Saskatoon, it is the only book publisher in Canada that exclusively publishes Métis-specific books by Métis authors and illustrators. Over 90 resources have been published by the Department. In addition to its role as a Métis-specific publisher, the Publishing Department carries out the following mandated duties:

- providing the public with a balanced analysis of Métis history and culture by producing high-quality and inclusive books, audio, audio-visual and multimedia resources, posters and prints from a Métis perspective
- publishing and promoting the works of emerging Métis writers and artists;
- putting all sales revenue back into our community-based non-profit publishing program;
- supporting Métis artistic, cultural and literary achievement throughout Canada;
- maintaining a conventional museum/archives and resource centre and an online virtual museum, which showcase the Institute's artefact and archival collection; and
- building partnerships with educators, community groups, non-profit agencies and government departments to ensure a strong Métis presence in decision-making bodies affecting book publishing, education and heritage issues.

The 2006/07 Publishing Catalogue lists publications in a number of areas: Our Proud Heritage; Indigenous Voices; Artistic Expressions; Music; and Learning Resources. The Department also publishes *New Breed Magazine: The Voice of the Métis in Saskatchewan* (published quarterly), with articles on Métis culture, history, education and community development.

In addition to 18 *Saskatchewan Book Awards* nominations, one *Margaret McWilliams Award* (Popular History) nomination, and one Anskohk *Aboriginal Literature Award* nomination, award-winning publications (*Saskatchewan Book Awards*) include: *Métis Legacy*—winner 2002 Publishing in Education; *The Bulrush Helps the Pond*—winner 2002 First Peoples Publishing; *Expressing Our Heritage: Métis Artistic Designs*—winner 2003 First Peoples Publishing and Publishing in Education; and *The Métis Alphabet Book*—winner 2006 First Peoples Publishing.

Other resources include teaching materials for K-12 students, the *Back to Batoche Interactive Website* and, *The Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture*. The Virtual Museum, developed in 2003, is a unique website which focuses on Métis history and culture, and includes images, oral histories and learning resources.

1.3 PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

During the period under study,[6] 946 individuals attended the DTI and SUNTEP programs; 454 participants in DTI ABE (including preparatory training) (48 per cent), 239 participants in DTI Skills Training programs and 253 participants in SUNTEP (25 and 27 per cent of participants respectively).[7] The administrative data show that the majority of participants attending Institute programs are women (65 per cent), due in part, to their overrepresentation in the SUNTEP program. The vast majority of participants (88 per cent) are drawn from the Métis community, with about one in ten participants being First Nations (concentrated in a small number of programs such as SUNTEP in Prince Albert). The bulk of DTI's programs are offered in the north of the province, reflecting the concentration of the Métis population in these areas. SUNTEP is offered in three locations in the province (Saskatoon, Prince Albert and Regina). Administrative data indicate that the program discontinuation rate during the study period was 11 per cent for DTI Skills Training programs and 38 per cent for DTI ABE/preparatory training.

Table 1.1: Participant Population Profile

	Percentage
Program Type	
Basic education/preparatory/pre-employment	48
Skills Training	25
SUNTEP	27
Year of participation (graduation/end date)	
2004	9
2005	32
2006	24
2007	35

[6] September 1, 2004 to June 30, 2007.

[7] Note that the actual number of enrolments in these programs is somewhat higher as there were individuals who participated in more than one program.

	Percentage
Sex	
Male	35
Female	65
Ancestry	
Métis	88
First Nations	10
Other	2
Location	
Prince Albert/Batoche	31
Regina/Saskatoon	18
La Loche	13
Ile-a-la Cross	10
Meadow Lake	10
Cumberland House	6
Moose Jaw	3
Nipawin	3
Lloydminster	2
Buffalo Narrows	1
Other (e.g., Green Lake, Yorkton)	3
Discontinuation Rate	
DTI ABE	37
DTI Skills Training	11

Source: GDI Administrative Data, 2007, n=946

1.4 Review Objectives and Issues

The objective of this research is to review the selected GDI programs for the purpose of assessing the rationale, design and delivery, effectiveness and impacts for the period between September 1, 2004 and June 30, 2007. The evaluation issues fall into four categories described below: rationale; delivery and design; impacts and effects; and alternatives (the specific evaluations are listed in Appendix A).[8]

- ***Rationale.*** The rationale questions are concerned with assessing whether or not GDI programs are still needed (e.g., assessed by student interest and labour market demand for graduates), whether they are meeting the needs of participants, and the extent to which potential students are aware of GDI's program offerings. In addition, rationale questions assess the specific cultural mandate of GDI which is to promote a positive cultural experience.

[8] Note that the presentation of evaluation findings does not follow this ordering in all cases. For example, results with respect to governance are presented in the chapter on design and delivery.

Finally, there are a series of questions that explore governance issues, the operation of the Board of Governors and support from AEEL.

- ***Delivery and design.*** Questions in this section are aimed at determining whether the program is delivered in a manner that reflects the intent of its objectives and outcomes and whether delivery is flexible and responsive to the circumstances of participants.
- ***Impacts and effects.*** For the most part, the potential impacts and effects of GDI programs are understood from the perspective of participants; there is limited evidence to assess the impacts of programs for other partners such as employers. For individuals, impacts of participation include program satisfaction, employment and employability, earnings advantages, reduced dependency on public income support and removal of barriers to employment. Affirmation of Métis identity and impacts on cultural knowledge and pride are also examined.
- ***Alternatives.*** Alternatives questions concern the strengths and challenges of GDI programs and the extent to which any changes could be made to GDI programs to enable it to better meet objectives and to improve efficiency in the future.

1.5 METHODOLOGY

The study's methodological approach involved four components described in turn below.

a) Review of Documents, Administrative Data and Literature

The purpose of this review of secondary sources was to examine contextual information related to the development and delivery of GDI programs. GDI administrative data were also utilized to develop the program profile, and to serve as a sampling frame for the survey of participants. Finally, a review of literature was conducted to examine best practices in education and training programming for the Métis community to understand funding and programming in other jurisdictions.

b) Key Informant Interviews

A total of 20 interviews were conducted with GDI staff (n=5), government officials (n=3), GDI board members (n=3) and external partners (n=9). Interviews were used to gather opinions and observations on the program. A mix of in-person and telephone interviews was conducted. Interviews were typically between 45 and 90 minutes in duration. With respect to reporting, given the qualitative nature of the interview data, the results are presented in a format that uses qualifiers rather than percentages. For the sake of consistency, qualifiers such as "small number", "minority", "few" or "some" refer to five or fewer

respondents. Qualifiers such as "several" or "many" refer to more than five but less than half of respondents. "Most" refers to more than half of respondents.

c) Survey of Participants

A telephone survey of participants in GDI's DTI (including Adult Basic Education and Skills Training programs) and SUNTEP programs was conducted. The survey population included all participants in the program between 2004 and 2007 (including those who completed their program and discontinuants). The survey explored participants' satisfaction with their program and their employment and education experiences since finishing their education or training.

The survey of GDI participants was hampered by the lack of an extant and centralized student information system. Electronic lists from the various programs and individual courses were amalgamated to the greatest extent possible, though there were vagaries across the lists in the way the data were coded and in completeness. During this timeframe, there were 946 individuals who participated in the GDI programs. However, there were a number of cases that were excluded due to reasons such as language barrier or duplicate number, resulting in a final usable sample of 863 cases.

While participants who were contacted for the survey were very willing to participate in the research (the refusal rate was five per cent), up-to-date contact information was not available for a significant portion of participants and, therefore, the attrition of the sample due to invalid numbers was significant (about 40 per cent).[9] Several methods were used to track participants (secondary or next of kin emergency contact numbers where they were available, directory assistance, GDI records/information). In total, 165 telephone interviews were completed with participants – 59 with DTI ABE participants, 45 with DTI Skills Training participants and 61 with SUNTEP participants. The response rate for the survey overall is 19 per cent, lower for ABE participants and higher for SUNTEP. The characteristics of the participant population and the survey sample were compared along a number of dimensions including sex, ancestry, status in program and date of participation. The survey data were found to be representative of the population with respect to these variables, with the exception of date of participation (the survey under represents those who participated earlier in the study period)

Given that the programs – DTI ABE, Skills Training and SUNTEP – are quite different in their content and target group, the analysis has considered these programs separately. The margin of error for the sub-groups ranges between 11 per cent for SUNTEP to 13 per cent for DTI Skills Training and 12 per cent for ABE (at the 95 per cent confidence interval).

---

[9] Other data show that this participant group – young and Aboriginal – is quite mobile. For example, the proportion of "movers" over a one year period is 14 per cent among residents of Saskatchewan overall, compared to 36 per cent of those 20 to 24 years of age (Statistics Canada, Census, 2006). The National Council of welfare also notes that Aboriginal people who live off reserve are nearly twice as likely to move in a given year as non-Aboriginal people. About 30 per cent of the Aboriginal population in large cities moves each year (National Council of Welfare, First nations, Métis and Inuit Children and Youth: Time to Act, Fall 2007, Volume 127.·

d) Survey of Staff

A telephone survey was conducted of GDI faculty and staff to obtain their views on issues such as program relevance, management and governance structures and alternatives. In total, 43 interviews were completed with staff drawn from all areas of GDI's operations – management/coordination staff, DTI and SUNTEP faculty, library and publishing staff, and financial and administrative personnel,. The response rate for the survey is 67 per cent. Results have a margin of error of eight per cent at the 95 per cent confidence interval (i.e., 19 times out of 20).

1.6 Caveats

The research approach for this evaluation study includes a blend of qualitative and quantitative methods. However, two caveats should be noted. First, the response rate for the survey of participants is quite low and, therefore, the survey estimates are less precise than would have been desired. Contact information, particularly for DTI ABE students and those who participated earlier in the study period was dated for these individuals as they moved from DTI onto additional education, employment or other paths. As well, given the small sample size, there was little scope for bivariate analyses. Second, the survey of faculty and staff was broadly cast to include all areas of the organization (e.g., DTI, SUNTEP, administrative personnel). As a result, for selected survey items, some staff lacked sufficient knowledge of areas of GDI's operations other than their own to provide an informed response (indicating a "don't know/no response" for these items).

1.7 Organization of the Report

Chapter Two includes a profile of DTI and SUNTEP participants based on the survey data. Chapter Three of this report describes the major findings of the study with respect to program rationale. Chapter Four presents findings pertaining to the design and delivery of the program. Impacts of the program for participants are discussed in Chapter Five. Chapter Six summarizes strengths and challenges. Summary observations are presented in Chapter Seven.

2. PARTICIPANT PROFILE

The purpose of the current section is to provide a more detailed profile of SUNTEP and DTI ABE and Skills Training participants based on the survey data. As mentioned previously, the survey sample was found to be comparable to the participant population on most variables with the exception of date of participation (those who participated earlier in the study period being underrepresented).

2.1 SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The majority of participants in GDI programs who were reached to participate in this study are women and are currently over age 25. There is a more balanced gender distribution among DTI Skills Training participants compared to DTI ABE and SUNTEP participants. DTI ABE participants have a younger age profile compared to the other participant groups. Most participants (90 per cent across the program groups) are Métis. About half of participants have children (lower among DTI skills participants) - one in five are part of a lone parent household (higher among DTI ABE participants), and an additional 27 per cent overall are married or are living common law with children.

Educational levels prior to program participation expectedly vary across the program given their content and target group – most DTI ABE participants have less than a high school education, while DTI Skills Training and SUNTEP participants are more apt to have been high school graduates and among SUNTEP students, a substantial proportion had other post-secondary experience prior to entering the program.

Table 2.1: Socio-Demographic Profile: Survey Respondents

	PROGRAM TYPE		
	DTI ABE (n=59) (%)	DTI Skills (n=45) (%)	SUNTEP (n=61) (%)
Sex			
Male	31	53	28
Female	69	47	72
Age			
<25	36	13	25
25-34	29	40	57
35+	35	47	18
Ancestry			
Métis	95	89	87
First Nations	3	2	13
Other	2	9	0

	PROGRAM TYPE		
	DTI ABE (n=59) (%)	DTI Skills (n=45) (%)	SUNTEP (n=61) (%)
Education (prior to program start)			
<High school	82	33	2
High school graduate/GED	14	47	69
Some post-secondary	0	16	20
Post-secondary graduate	3	2	11
Household structure			
Single person living alone	12	22	18
Married/common law, no children	10	13	11
Married/common law, with children	19	27	36
Lone parent household	32	16	15
Single person living with other family or non-related persons	27	20	20

Source: GDI Participant Survey, 2008

2.2 Pre-Program Work Experience Profile

In the two years prior to participating in their DTI program, 37 per cent of DTI ABE participants were employed. This group was much less likely to be working prior to their program than those in DTI Skills Training or SUNTEP programs. Of those ABE participants who were employed, 64 per cent were employed in permanent jobs, and the remaining individuals were in seasonal and casual jobs. Most (55 per cent) of the participants who were employed were in this job for 12 months or less prior to attending the ABE program. The work week for ABE participants consisted of an average of 35 hours per week prior to their program, with earnings of $371 weekly. Over half (55 per cent) quit their job to participate in the ABE program, 14 per cent were laid off or had a lack of work, and five per cent each indicated that their job ended due to the position being temporary or seasonal, personal or family responsibilities, medical/health reasons, quit to take another job, maternity leave, or that their job never ended.

Four in five (80 per cent) participants in DTI skills programs were employed in the two years prior to their participation in the program. Similar to the jobs held by ABE participants, six in ten of those in DTI programs held permanent jobs before starting their program, having been in the position for nearly three years on average. DTI participants worked an average of 40 hours per week, higher than the other two participant groups measured and earned $579 per week on average. One quarter of DTI participants ended their job to start the program. Another 22 per cent were laid off due to a lack of work. One in five DTI Skills Training participants indicate that their job never ended, presumably they were still working in the position while attending the program.

Similar to the DTI skills participants, four in five (80 per cent) SUNTEP participants were employed in the two years prior to their participation in the program. Three-quarters (78 per cent) indicated

that this was a permanent or regular job. One in ten participants worked in seasonal jobs, eight per cent were casual or on call, and four per cent in term positions. Three-quarters of participants were in full-time jobs, earning $444 on average each week. Most (63 per cent) indicated their job ended because they started with the SUNTEP program, one in ten ended due to the temporary, seasonal, or contract nature of the position, six per cent identify that their job never ended, another six per cent were dissatisfied with their job, and four per cent were laid off or moved.

Table 2.2: Prior Employment Experience

	PROGRAM TYPE		
	ABE (n=59) (%)	**DTI Skills (n=45)** (%)	**SUNTEP (n=61)** (%)
Thinking back to the TWO-YEAR period before you started, were you employed at all during this period?			
Yes	37	80	80
No	59	20	20
	ABE (n=22) (%)	**DTI Skills (n=36)** (%)	**SUNTEP (n=49)** (%)
Was this job...?			
Permanent or regular	64	61	78
Seasonal	18	17	10
Term	0	6	4
Casual or on call	18	17	8
How long were you at this job (in months)?			
Up to 12 months	55	33	27
12-24 months	27	28	37
>24	18	30	34
Mean (months)	16.9	34.8	33.0
How many hours per week did you usually work?			
Less than 30 hours	27	17	33
31+ hours	73	83	77
Earnings (Converted to 2007 dollars)			
Average weekly earnings	$371	$579	$444
Average hourly earnings	$12.0	$14.5	$13.2
What was the main reason your job ended?			
Going to school/started with SUNTEP/DTI	55	25	63
Laid off job/lack of work	14	22	4
Job never ended	5	19	6
Temporary/seasonal/contract	5	11	10

Source: GDI Participant Survey, 2008

3. RATIONALE

3.1 NEED FOR PROGRAMMING

Key informants were strongly supportive of the continued need and relevance of GDI programming in all areas – SUNTEP, DTI ABE and Skills Training and the Publishing Department. Interviewees pointed both to the demographics in the province and the current labour shortage in Saskatchewan as two key reasons why GDI's training and education efforts remain sound.

a) Demographics

According to the 2006 census, 48,115 individuals self-identified as Métis in the province, just over five per cent of the Saskatchewan population.[10] The number of Métis people living in Saskatchewan is a matter of some dispute, however; the MN—S estimates the number of Métis in the province to be much higher. It is clear though that the Métis population is growing; in Canada in the last decade the Métis population grew by 91 per cent (compared to 29 per cent among First Nations people and eight per cent for the non-Aboriginal population). This increase is partially explained by demographic factors such as a higher birth rate, as well as non-demographic factors such as a greater propensity for Aboriginal people to self-identify and better census coverage.[11]

The socio-demographic profile of Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan is notable. The average age of Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan is lower than for non-Aboriginal people. The median age is 26 for Métis in Saskatchewan, the youngest of any province and much younger that the median age for Saskatchewan overall at 40 years. In Saskatchewan, 29 per cent of the Métis population is made up of children aged 14 and under (compared to 39 per cent among First Nations people in province and 17 per cent within the non-Aboriginal population).[12]

Métis people have lower formal educational levels compared to the non-Aboriginal population in the province, as well as lower levels of literacy (though, on average, higher than First Nations people). Linked to this, Métis people have lower participation rates in the labour market, though unemployment rates are decreasing over time (Aboriginal employment levels grew by 18 per cent in Saskatchewan between 2004 and 2007 compared to 3 per cent in non-Aboriginal employment)[13]. Reflecting lower levels of education and employment, annual personal income among Métis people in the province is also lower compared to non-Aboriginal residents of the province.

---

[10] Saskatchewan Aboriginal Peoples: 2006 Census of Canada. Online: www.stats.gov.sk.ca/pop/

[11] Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples in Canada in 2006: Inuit, Métis and First Nations, 2006 Census: Métis

[12] Statistics Canada, 2006 Census.

[13] BC Stats, Business Indicators, February 2008.

Table 3.1: Socio-Demographic Profile within Saskatchewan

	First Nations	Métis	Non-Aboriginal
Age (2006)			
Median Age	20	26	41
% under 14 years of age	39	29	17
Education (15 year+)			
<High school	56	39	28
High school graduate/GED	19	26	28
Post-secondary	25	35	45
Unemployment Rate (2006)	24.9	10.6	4.2
Literacy Rates urban population[14]			
Male: Levels 3+	33	39	62
Female: Levels 3+	28	48	64
Average Total Income (all sources)*	$15,960		$26,910

Source: Statistics Canada 2006 Census, with noted exception
*2001 (2006 data not available at time of submission)

b) Current labour conditions

Saskatchewan is expected to be an economic leader in 2008. Increased economic activity and prosperity, coupled with an aging workforce, has given rise to acute labour shortages in many skill areas, however. As of February, 2008, the unemployment rate in the province is at 4.1 per cent, down 1.7 points from this period two years ago, and below the current national unemployment rate of 5.8 per cent.[15] Job numbers in the province continue to rise, with job increases in an array of industries, including: construction, services, the oil and gas industries, trade and finance, and insurance and real estate. Over the next five years, two-thirds of job openings in the province will require a degree, certificate or diploma.[16] Government strategies to address the labour shortage often fall into two categories – development of the local Aboriginal workforce and reliance on an immigrant labour pool. Conditions, therefore, are very favourable for Skills Training and workforce development projects to enhance Métis success.

With respect to the demand for teachers, specifically, this is reportedly difficult to predict – and is dependant on factors such as birthrates, school division amalgamation or closures, and retirements. Currently in Saskatchewan there are teacher shortages on reserves and in remote and northern

[14] Source: International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey, 2003, Statistics Canada. Results shown are the per cent of individuals at literacy proficiency Levels 3 and over. Those measuring Levels 1 and 2 typically have not yet mastered the minimum foundation of literacy skills needed to perform tasks generally viewed to be important for full participation in social and economic life.

[15] Statistics Canada: Latest release from the Labour Force Survey, March 7, 2008. Online: www.statcan.ca/

[16] Training System Review: Final Report of the Training System Review Panel, A New Training Model for Saskatchewan, 2005.

communities. As well, the proportion of Aboriginal teachers does not reflect the proportion of Aboriginal K-12 students.

According to key informants, with its emphasis on basic and post-secondary training and education, GDI's programs provide an important vehicle to draw Métis people in the province (who would not otherwise attend mainstream institutions) toward improving their formal qualifications, and to move into employment.

While there are a variety of needs in the Saskatchewan labour market, GDI and specifically DTI cannot contribute to meeting all of these – the Institute is relatively small compared to institutions such as SIAST, and has a bounded constituency (i.e., Métis people). Therefore, needs assessment is a critical component of planning program offerings to ensure their relevance to labour market needs. As part of its annual business planning, DTI involves MN—S Locals[17] and MN—S Regional Area Directors[18] to provide input on the training and education needs of their community with respect to basic education and Skills Training.[19] This information is supplemented by formal needs assessments conducted by SIAST and the regional colleges, as well as by regional organizations such as the Northern Labour Market Committee. The business plan also reflects GDI's overall five-year strategic plan. This strategic plan – adopted in 2004 – identifies apprenticeship-type training and training in health-related occupations as priorities for DTI, as well as enhanced delivery of basic education.[20] Key informants who were familiar with the process seemed to think it works reasonably well and that the Institute works well with other partners to identify needs. The Institute's faculty and staff concur – three-quarters agree that education and training programs at GDI meet the needs of the Saskatchewan labour market.

GDI faculty and staff were further presented with six GDI programs and services and asked to what extent these programs and services are meeting the needs and interests of GDI learners. Over two-thirds (68 per cent) of staff rated the SUNTEP program as meeting the needs and interests of GDI learners to a great extent. This is followed closely by the provision of Métis-specific curriculum resources and published materials, which 65 per cent of staff indicate is meeting the needs of students to a great extent. The next highest rated program or service is the Métis-specific Library (61 per cent), followed by student support services such as academic and personal support counselling and tutoring (58 per cent). The DTI programs were rated lower among the programs and services measured. Just under half (49 per cent) of GDI staff rate the DTI Literacy, ABE, and preparatory programs as meeting the needs of learners to a great extent, and 42 per cent similarly rate the DTI certificate and diploma training programs. Note, however, that for the latter two items one in five faculty and staff were unsure or declined to provide a rating (when 'don't

---

[17] Within the twelve MN—S Regions, there are approximately 130 Métis Locals, each with a democratically elected president.

[18] Each of the twelve MN—S Regions has an elected Regional Director. Directors are members of the MN—S Provincial Métis Council (PMC), which is the cabinet responsible for all MNS affiliates, departments, programs and ministers.

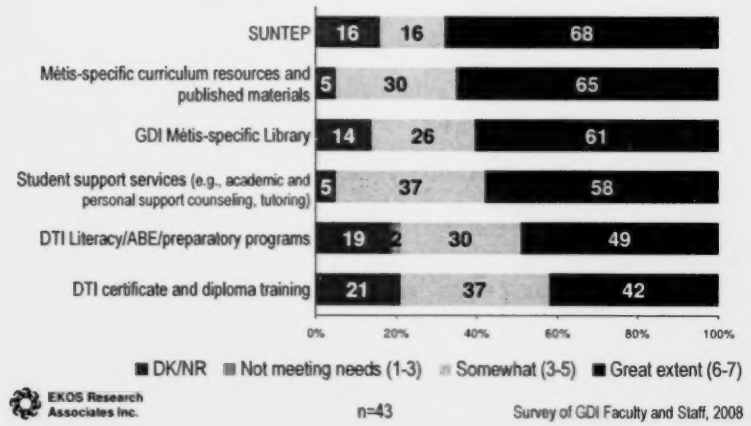
[19] DTI— "*Helping Build Brighter Futures*" Business Plan 2007-08, June 2007.

[20] *Métis Belonging...honouring our past...fulfilling the present...dreams of our future. Strategic Plan of the Gabriel Dumont Institute*, 2004.

know' responses are removed, 58 and 51 per cent of faculty and staff respectively believe DTI literacy, and certificate and diploma training programs are meeting learner needs and interests).

Relevance of GDI Programs and Services: Faculty and Staff

"To what extent do you feel the following GDI programs and services are meeting the needs and interests of GDI learners?"



EKOS Research Associates Inc.

n=43

Survey of GDI Faculty and Staff, 2008

Of the few staff who indicated that one or more program areas were not meeting needs, the reasons varied. Some were services-focused such as providing more academic tutoring or having an advocate work with students to assist them with their concerns. Other concerns included resources such as the need for more library content or not enough staff. Increasing literacy initiatives was also mentioned in that reading and writing skills need to be improved in all programs.

3.2 Overlap and Duplication

While there are other institutions in the province including SIAST and regional colleges that offer ABE and certificate and diploma training, few key informants expressed concern about overlap or duplication between GDI programs and other offerings in the province. According to interviewees, the need for upgrading and training within the province's Aboriginal population and the demand for skilled labour fuel a requirement for various program alternatives. Institutions are also encouraged by AEEL to plan collaboratively and cost-share delivery where it makes sense. GDI was perceived to offer a distinctive and beneficial program, aimed at an important demographic segment of the province. MN—S Locals from time-to-time offer basic education programs in their communities; however, this is quite limited and can complement DTI programs when they are not offered in the area.

Similarly, key informants viewed SUNTEP (in fact, all the "TEP" programs – NORTEP, ITEP) as offering diversity in programming, each meeting the needs of their respective student bodies, and each

yielding high-quality graduates with different expertise. SUNTEP was also perceived to help the broader Métis community by producing graduates who become Métis educators and role models. Overlapping curriculum ensures common core study and skills, while the Métis focus results in complimentary programs to mainstream teaching degree studies, structured to support Métis students and enable them to thrive in the program.

With respect to publishing, the Métis resources produced by the Publishing Department are unique in Canada. These publications are proving to be a valuable as part of the curricula and resources for GDI's students and programs. Additionally, GDI has also become a conservator of Métis history, and a source for those seeking Métis information throughout the world.

Most faculty and staff (86 per cent) indicated that there is no overlap or duplication between the GDI offerings (SUNTEP, DTI, Publishing Department) and other programs or organizations in the community. Of the small number who say there is overlap, most feel that some programs (such as with Northwest or Northlands Regional Colleges and with other Adult Basic Education programs) overlap in regards to their learning component, but they do not overlap in Métis-specific cultural programming.

4. Design and Delivery

4.1 Program Array

As described above, DTI (and, where relevant, SUNTEP) programming includes a number of distinctive features—culturally-affirming environment and attention to Métis heritage and history, personal and academic counselling, Library and Publishing Department, community-based delivery of basic and Skills Training, and a preparatory phase of training where it is needed. Key informants deemed the current programming package as very appropriate and relevant to the needs of the student body. These components also compare well with best practices identified in the literature.

Taken together, these essential components were perceived to:

- Enhance access. The culturally-affirming and welcoming environment helps to attract students to training and education who may otherwise not be drawn to mainstream institutions. Community-based training helps reduce location as a barrier to participation.
- Address barriers and retention. Small class sizes and individual attention from instructors build comfort levels in the classroom. Any barriers to success can be rapidly identified and addressed through referrals or through the Institute's own academic counselling and supports.
- Contribute to success. The preparatory training phase for demanding programs such as Practical Nursing help students to adjust to the training environment and become familiar with the terminology and foundational skills for success in the core program.

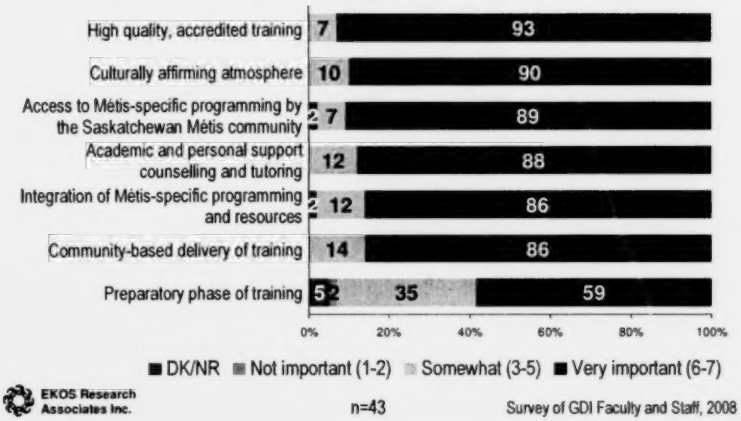
Faculty and staff were similarly positive about the Institute's program design features. There were seven design and delivery features of GDI programs that faculty and staff were asked to consider, rating how *important* each of the features are in contributing to the successful program design and delivery and the *effectiveness* of their implementation. With respect to importance, most of the features measured are viewed as being very important by GDI faculty staff (only a seven percentage point spread between the top and bottom rated feature, with the exception of preparatory training). The feature receiving the highest importance rating is the high quality, accredited training (93 per cent of staff rated this is as very important). This is followed by nine in ten staff indicating that a culturally-affirming environment is very important and 89 per cent rating access to Métis-specific programming by the Saskatchewan Métis community as very important.

Academic and personal support counselling and tutoring is rated as very important by 88 per cent of staff, followed by integration of Métis-specific programming and resources, and community-based delivery of training (86 per cent each). The design and delivery feature receiving the lowest importance rating is the preparatory phase of training; however, the majority, 59 per cent, still found this feature to be

very important (and note that this preparatory phase is not a feature of all programs, being most critical for the Licensed Practical Nurse program only).

Importance of Program Design and Delivery Features: Faculty and Staff

"How important are each of the following in contributing to the successful design and delivery of GDI programs?"



EKOS Research Associates Inc.

n=43

Survey of GDI Faculty and Staff, 2008

In terms of effectiveness, three-quarters (75 per cent) of staff feel GDI has been very effective in providing high quality and accredited training – this factor also received the highest importance rating. This is followed by two thirds of staff rating cultural aspects of the program as being very effective such as the integration of Métis-specific programming and resources (68 per cent), a culturally-affirming atmosphere (67 per cent) and academic and personal support counselling and tutoring (63 per cent).

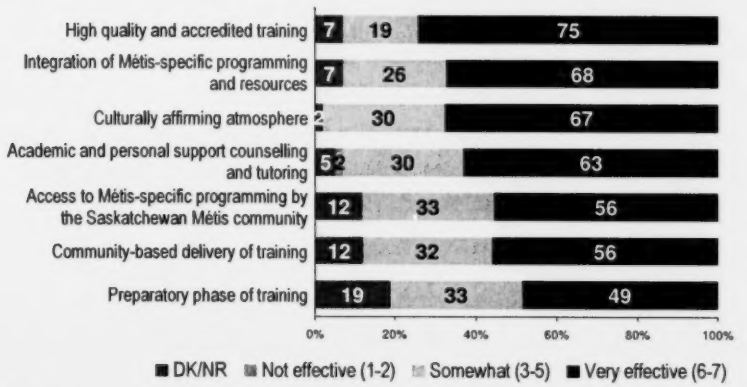
Providing access to training and education to the province's Métis community (a primary vehicle for achieving this being community-based training) received somewhat lower ratings in terms of effectiveness. Just over half of Institute faculty and staff rated the Institute effective in providing access to Métis-specific programming by the Saskatchewan Métis community and community-based delivery of training (56 per cent each). When 'don't know/no response' is excluded, 62 per cent believe implementation of these components is effective. Still, this comparatively lower rating in relation to other design and delivery attributes may reflect some concerns about the ability of the Institute to provide access to training and education across the province or in different skill areas, or may possibly indicate misgivings about the quality of physical facilities or human resources available for community-based training.

Just under half, 49 per cent, rated the implementation of the preparatory phase of training as very effective, which also received the lowest importance rating. Note again that the familiarity with this delivery component is apt to be lower among faculty and staff as preparatory training is a component of only a small number of DTI programs. The proportion who were unsure or declined to respond is somewhat

higher for this item (when 'don't know' responses are excluded, 58 per cent say preparatory training is implemented effectively).

Effectiveness of Program Design and Delivery Features: Faculty and Staff

"How effective has GDI been in implementing these programming components?"



EKOS Research Associates Inc.

n=43

Survey of GDI Faculty and Staff, 2008

4.2 Cultural Affirmation and Resources

As mentioned above, one of GDI's objectives is to promote the renewal and development of Métis culture, as well as to provide a culturally-affirming and supportive environment for learners. According to the majority of key informants, GDI's cultural mission has been well-integrated into the Institute's education and training programming. These respondents pointed to a number of ways in which the cultural component is manifest:

- Curriculum enhancements: SUNTEP teacher training and DTI ABE and certificate and diploma training are enhanced by units covering Métis culture and history;
- Publishing Department. The materials produced by the Publishing Department and resources such as the GDI Library and Virtual Museum are perceived to be significant assets for supporting culturally-specific programming;
- Participation in provincial initiatives. Recently DTI played an important role in the redevelopment of the ABE 10 curriculum in the province to incorporate Aboriginal perspectives, and in particular, a Métis perspective.

- Staff profile: Over 70 per cent of faculty and staff at GDI are Métis, which contributes to a culturally-affirming atmosphere, an understanding of the clientele, and also contributes to positive morale.

The cultural component is perceived by key informants to distinguish GDI from other training and educational institutions, and is "vital", even "monumental" to the success of students. By building a sense of community and belonging, the cultural component is considered to be important in student retention in programs, as well as increasing pride, cultural identity and self-esteem among students and graduates.

Among faculty and staff, virtually all agreed (responded 5, 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale) with the statement that "culturally-specific programs are essential to ensure Métis students succeed in basic and post-secondary education," and that "GDI fosters a sense of cultural identity and pride in being Métis among learners".

In terms of cultural resources, GDI's Publishing Department produces a variety of cultural resources including print, audiovisual and multimedia projects. In the last several years, production has increased from two to three projects each year to six to eight. There has been a corresponding increase in Publishing Department sales: sales revenues average between $80,000-$125,000 each year, with the last six years (2001-2007) being substantially higher than the years prior. According to the department:

- *The Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture* – an online Métis-specific primary and secondary resource depository – averaged over 4,000 unique visitors each month in 2007, with a total of 44,358 unique visitors to the website during this year;
- *The Aboriginal Resource List* for K-12 (1998) developed by the Aboriginal Education Unit, Saskatchewan Education, lists over 25 GDI publications;
- *New Breed Magazine* is published quarterly – 1,000 copies are printed and distributed, and the magazine is also available for download free of charge on the Virtual Museum; and
- Publishing Department staff are active participants in Métis cultural events held in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

4.3 Student Supports

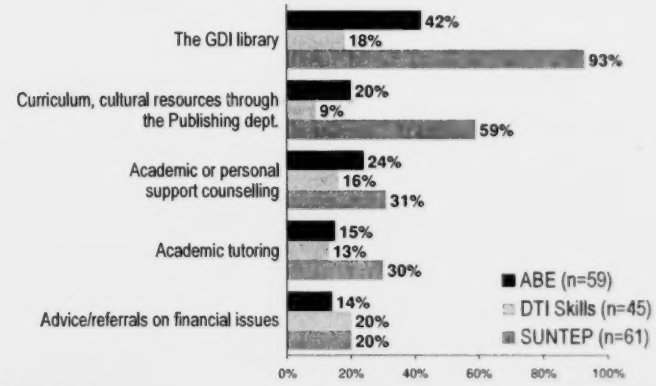
GDI offers a number of support services to its students. DTI and SUNTEP participants were asked which services they used when they were a student. Of the supports used, DTI ABE participants mentioned the GDI Library most often (42 per cent). Nearly one-quarter (24 per cent) accessed academic or personal support counselling. One in five each used the Publishing Department's curriculum and cultural resources, or advice and referrals on financial issues. Fifteen per cent of ABE participants used academic tutoring.

DTI Skills Training participants received advice and referrals on financial issues slightly more often than other supports. Eighteen per cent of DTI Skills Training students accessed the GDI Library, much less than ABE or SUNTEP students. DTI Skills Training students also made use of academic or personal support counselling (16 per cent), academic tutoring (13 per cent), and curriculum or cultural resources through the Publishing Department (nine per cent).

SUNTEP participants made more use of student support services than DTI participants. Most (93 per cent) used the GDI Library, followed by curriculum and cultural resources through the Publishing Department (59 per cent). Thirty-one per cent used academic or personal support counselling, 30 per cent accessed academic tutoring, and one in five (20 per cent) made use of advice and referrals on financial issues.

Use of Student Support Services

"GDI offers a number of student support services. Did you use any of the following when you were a DTI/SUNTEP student?"



EKOS Research Associates Inc.

Survey of GDI Program Participants, 2008

The sources of financial support used by participants during their studies varied considerably among the programs.[21] For 73 per cent of DTI ABE participants, the main source of financial support was the Provincial Training Allowance, used by ABE students far more than DTI Skills Training or SUNTEP students. To a lesser extent, DTI ABE students used employment earnings or a federal or provincial government student loan (seven per cent each) (the latter is an example of some confusion about funding source as participants would not be eligible for a student loan for Adult Basic Education). Other sources of funding mentioned by DTI ABE students included their savings, family or friends, Métis Employment and Training of Saskatchewan Inc. (METSI) or Band funding, GDI, and employment insurance.

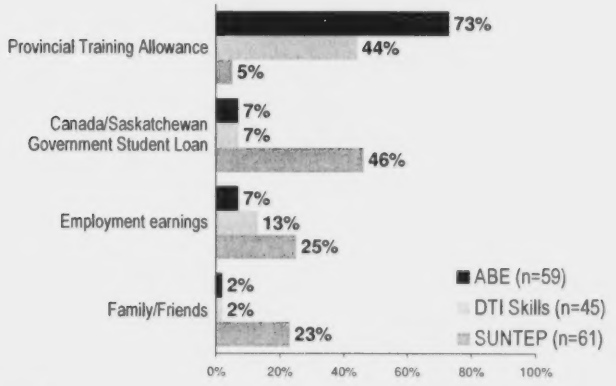
[21] Note that some of the responses indicate confusion among participants about the true source of their support or method errors due to miscoding of responses during the survey.

The main source of funding reported by DTI Skills Training participants was also the Provincial Training Allowance (44 per cent) (again, this is inaccurate as participants in Skills Training programs cannot receive PTA unless their program is under 12 weeks and, therefore, responses more likely refer to Métis employment and training funding provided at that time through METSI). Additionally, DTI participants used employment insurance (13 per cent) and employment earnings (13 per cent) for financial support during their training. Seven per cent of DTI Skills Training students listed Canada or Saskatchewan government student loans, or the MN—S or their Band as a source of funding during their time as a student. Other funding sources mentioned included GDI Employment and Training (four per cent) or their savings (two per cent). Eleven per cent of DTI Skills Training participants did not remember or refused to provide their funding sources.

SUNTEP participants were more apt to use Canada or Saskatchewan government student loans for financial support while they were a student (46 per cent). One quarter used employment earnings (25 per cent) or financial support from friends or family (23 per cent) during their studies, again, much more often than ABE or DTI participants. Further funding sources included the MN—S or Band funding (13 per cent), scholarships or bursaries (eight per cent), Provincial Training Allowance (although university programs like SUNTEP are not eligible for PTA at all or savings (five per cent each).

Main Sources of Financial Support During Program

"What were your main sources of financial support during the time you were a student at DTI/SUNTEP?"



EKOS Research Associates Inc.

Survey of GDI Program Participants, 2008

4.4 Awareness of GDI Programs

While there are no quantitative measures of community awareness of GDI programs that are available, key informants believe there is fair to high awareness of GDI within the Métis community (though some estimated awareness at less than half of the community while others believe virtually all Métis would

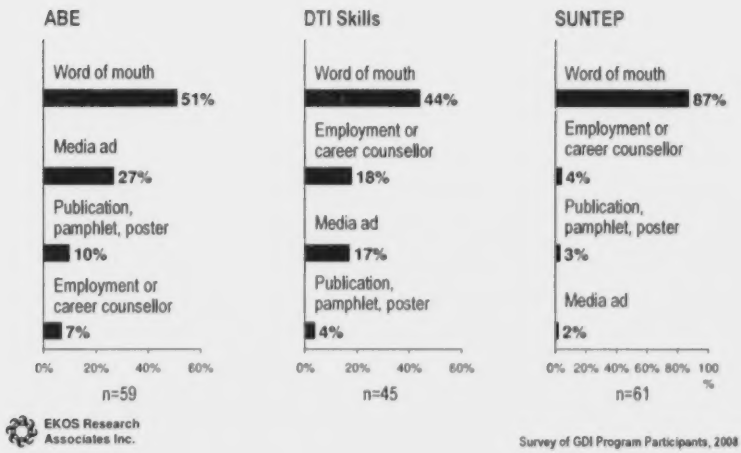
be aware of GDI). Several key informants noted that awareness of GDI is likely higher in the north of the province, and among individuals who connected to their local or make use of its services. Among faculty and staff, 72 per cent agreed (responded 5, 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale) with the statement that "Métis people in this community are aware of GDI programs and services."

Marketing of GDI programs involves a number of vehicles: their main website (www.gdins.org) provides program information; there are organizational publications such as The GDI Communicator (staff newsletter) and New Breed Magazine; posters and pamphlets; some media advertisements; and personal presentations. Locals in the 12 MN—S Regions can be good conduits of information, as well as partner organizations (e.g., Career and Employment Services). Key informants believe that program awareness is generated in large part through word of mouth, however.

Consistent with these views, most DTI and SUNTEP participants listed word of mouth as the source of where they first found out about their program. Half (51 per cent) of ABE participants mentioned word of mouth, followed by publication, pamphlet or posters (12 per cent) and media ads (eight per cent), and. DTI skills participants found out about GDI through word of mouth slightly less often at 44 per cent, followed by media advertisements (13 per cent), an employment or career counsellor such as the Can-Sask Centre (11 per cent), Métis or First Nations employment or training centres (seven per cent). Word of mouth was the predominant source of information about GDI for SUNTEP students. Nearly nine in ten (87 per cent) indicated that they first heard about GDI through word of mouth from friends or family.

Program Awareness

"How did you first find out about the Gabriel Dumont Institute?"



EKOS Research Associates Inc.

Survey of GDI Program Participants, 2008

4.5 PARTNERSHIPS

a) Government

GDI has multiple partnerships with government departments and agencies at both the federal and provincial levels. This evaluation focused on the partnership between GDI and the provincial Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour (AEEL)—the Institute's primary funder for the DTI and SUNTEP training and education programs. The partnership is grounded in a five-year negotiated contractual agreement which outlines the funding parameters. The Ministry has also provided additional support in the way of Board governance training and organizational policy development, for example. For accountability purposes, AEEL plays a monitoring role and, at this time, approves all individuals appointed to the Board of Governors.

As with other institutions in the province, AEEL reportedly provides overall leadership and strategic direction to ensure that Saskatchewan education and training systems are coherent and offer high quality education and training to meet the province's labour market needs. Finally, AEEL plays a small role in promoting awareness of GDI—the Institute's offerings are posted on Ministry websites and other promotional materials, and AEEL also plays a role in encouraging Aboriginal participation in education and employment more generally.

Both GDI and the representatives of AEEL expressed satisfaction with the partnership – variously described as being "open", "good working relationship" and "excellent." While the level of provincial funding to GDI is a bone of contention for the Institute (described in more detail in Section 4.7), the relationship is generally perceived to be a productive one. AEEL's support and leadership is seen by key informants to have had a positive impact on the credibility of the Institute.

b) Universities

GDI has a long-standing partnership with the University of Regina (U of R) and the University of Saskatchewan (U of S) to deliver the SUNTEP programs (the Prince Albert program being affiliated with the University of Saskatchewan). This partnership is expressed through a recently-negotiated contract (December 1, 2007). The new contract modernizes an agreement that had been in place for 27 years and incorporates new elements such as a new research component to explore program development options. On the heels of this process, the participants were quite pleased with the agreement – a much more concise and forward-looking document, reflecting a more equal partnerships, and the institutions' positive history and atmosphere of trust.

There have also been a number of efforts on the part of the universities to address the previous marginalization of the SUNTEP programs within the respective educational departments. SUNTEP faculty are now voting members of the Faculty Council at the University of Saskatchewan, and active participants in departmental planning and special events. There is also a closer physical location and

greater collaboration between the Education Student Societies at both the U of S and U of R. The new agreement also paves the way for greater sharing of faculty. The majority view is that the partnership between GDI and the universities is working quite well. Key informants from both the universities and GDI describe the relationship as "excellent" and "cordial."

c) SIAST and Regional Colleges

DTI currently has a federation agreement with the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Sciences and Technology (SIAST). The agreement, originally negotiated in 1994, allows DTI to broker SIAST certificate and diploma training curricula, such as the Practical Nursing Program, for delivery to Métis students. The objectives of the Agreement are to:

- Enhance access to and completion of technical education and adult upgrading by Métis individuals and communities;
- Enable collaborative planning between DTI and SIAST;
- Increase the involvement, decision-making and accountability for Métis people in technical, adult upgrading and basic education; and,
- Facilitate the delivery of training programs by DTI to Métis communities.[22]

The federation agreement academically integrates SIAST and DTI and is a cornerstone for the Institute which enables it to deliver accredited training (augmented with cultural or other content) to its constituents. While there have been some issues of dispute from time to time (e.g., negotiating delivery in some jurisdictions such as Saskatoon to avoid duplication), key informants generally characterized the relationship as effective and beneficial.

Regional colleges are DTI's other major educational partner and key informants' characterization of this partnership is more variable. Under a protocol agreement, the partnership with regional colleges involves joint planning and partnering to deliver training in selected communities. The DTI program administrative data show, for example, that the partnerships with regional colleges are most often with those located in the North, reflecting the geographical distribution of DTI's own programming. Examples include delivery of LPN Preparatory Program with North West Regional College in Meadow Lake, and Development Studies in Cumberland House and Career Start Preparation in Ile-a-la Crosse with Northlands Regional College. The nature of the partnership might involve DTI's delivery of training to Métis students using regional college facilities or DTI's purchase of seats in regional college-delivered training courses. These joint activities are negotiated on an ad hoc basis and depend heavily on the demand for the training in the community, and the number of Métis students interested.

[22] Dumont Technical Institute 2001 Update Report.

According to GDI/DTI representatives, the partnership with regional colleges depends also on the willingness of both parties to engage in a partnered delivery arrangement and willingness to assume a leadership role in delivery in some instances and cede the leadership role in others. Concerns about "turf" and control are perceived to be barriers in some cases to DTI's more active delivery of programs to the Métis community in certain areas of the province and, therefore in realizing its provincial mandate. These partnerships therefore have come under strain from time to time.

Threaded through some of the key informant comments on partnerships, particularly from the perspective of GDI/DTI was a concern about emerging competition among educational institutions for Aboriginal students which might impact other institutions' willingness to partner. The view of some other key informants, however, is that there is significant training and development work with the Aboriginal community yet to do and, therefore, there is as yet little worry that this educational "market" is fully tapped.

DTI has somewhat less robust, though still collegial, partnerships with the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology (SIIT) and the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission (SATCC). With respect to SIIT, in the past, DTI has brokered some of its training curricula (e.g., the Management Studies curriculum). DTI has a staff member who represents Métis people on behalf of the MN—S on the SATCC.

d) Employers

With respect to employers, GDI/DTI has built alliances with public sector employers of its SUNTEP graduates (school boards) and the LPN programs (health regions). There have also been a handful of examples of more structured partnerships where the employer—typically government or Crown Corporations - and GDI/DTI have struck agreements to "train for jobs." In 2007-08, DTI delivered a Heavy Duty Truck and Transport Mechanics program in partnership with the Saskatchewan Department of Highways in Prince Albert. In 2006, DTI entered into a partnership with SaskEnergy to deliver an Induction Readiness Training Program to help prepare Métis people for existing trade positions within SaskEnergy. The program involved a 7-week training program to prepare a group of Métis students for SaskEnergy Induction Interviews. The training involved Class 1A truck driver training, pre-employment Skills Training and other concepts and materials related to SaskEnergy operations. Upon successful completion of the training program and passing the Induction Interviews, SaskEnergy would hire the students.

The impression of most key informants who were aware of the employer partnerships is that these relationships have worked effectively. A case study of the SaskEnergy partnership found that, despite some initial delivery challenges and quick start-up, the project was generally successful (leading to offers of employment to about one-half of participants, similar to SaskEnergy's internal recruitment process).

While not evaluated, it should be noted that GDI's Publishing Department undertakes a number of partnerships with the publishing, archival, educational and museum communities, as well as the media. The Department partners with the Batoche National Historical Site to promote Métis history, culture and the Michif languages. The Department of Canadian Heritage, through the *Aboriginal Languages*

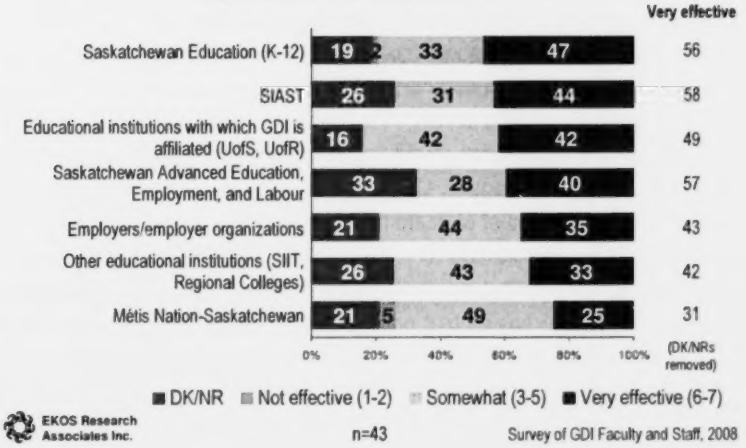
Initiative, is a key partner, and GDI will soon be handling all the Michif-language programming for this department.

e) Faculty and Staff Perspectives on Partnerships

Faculty and staff generally rated the Institute's partnerships as at least somewhat effective (though for any one partner, one in five to one in three were unsure or declined to comment, reflecting the broad scope of the faculty and staff survey, which obtained opinions from all areas of the organization). The partnership receiving the highest rating was with Saskatchewan Education, representing the Kindergarten to Grade 12 system (47 per cent of faculty and staff rated coordination and collaboration with Saskatchewan Education to be very effective). The effectiveness of coordination and collaboration with SIAST received the next highest rating (44 per cent), followed by educational institutions with which GDI is affiliated such as the U of R and the U of R (42 per cent) and AEEL (40 per cent). Thirty-five per cent rate coordination and collaboration with employers and employer organizations as very effective, while one third (33 per cent) of GDI staff rate the partnership with other educational institutions such as SIIT and Regional Colleges as very effective. Finally, one quarter (25 per cent) indicate the partnership with the MN—S to be very effective – a reflection of a tumultuous period within the organization that has undermined this linkage.[23]

Effectiveness of GDI Partnerships

"How effective has coordination and collaboration been with the following organizations that GDI partners with?"



EKOS Research Associates Inc.

n=43

Survey of GDI Faculty and Staff, 2008

[23] In 2004, MN—S election results were called into question by the Lampard Report (A Study to Answer the Question: Was the Métis election of 2004 run in a fair and democratic manner such that its results can be relied upon by Métis people and the Government of Saskatchewan?), which led the provincial and federal governments to withdraw funding from the organization.

Of the GDI faculty and staff who indicated that one or more of the partnerships have not been effective, the reasons were divided between the lack of freedom within partnerships and the interference of politics. Some staff indicate that with partnerships, programming can be conditional on what the partner allows them do to rather than what would best meet the needs of the students. Increasing communication and in-person meetings with partners and funders were identified as necessary to improve in order to represent the needs and mandate of GDI. The potential for political influence was also named as a factor that could undermine partnership effectiveness.

4.6 GOVERNANCE

a) Board of Governors Selection Process

GDI is governed on behalf of the province's Métis community through a Board of Governors. The Board is comprised of 12 representatives from each of the 12 MN—S Regions of the Province, plus an MN—S elected official as Chair. In the bylaws, the elected official is the MN—S member assigned the Education portfolio.

The process to select Board members is as follows: 1) the position is advertised in the MN—S area with a statement of qualifications and duties; 2) resumes are collected and shared with the Area Director. The Regional Council identifies their choice through a motion at a duly constituted MN—S Regional Council meeting; 3) The Provincial Métis Council of the MN—S would then consider and/or approve the selected candidate; 4) The candidate's name and resume would be sent to the Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour for final approval; 5) The board member would go through training and sign applicable code of conduct/conflict of interest guidelines prior to participating at a meeting.

There were some mixed views among key informants about the effectiveness of the process to select of members of the Board of Governors. On the one hand, there were some positive comments about the current size of the Board; the number of Board members was reduced from 24 to six members in 1995, and then increased in 2003 to its current size of 12 members plus the Chairperson. As well, some key informants felt that the Board embodied adequate regional representation and that there were sufficient "checks and balances" in place to ensure that political influences on the Board were minimized. On this topic, there was some discussion by key informants about the role of AEEL in approving Board members, and while this was reportedly an area of contention among some in the Métis community, these key informants were of the opinion that Ministry approval was, at this time, a useful safeguard to ensure protection of the Board from potential political influence and favoured that this role be retained for now.

While most key informants would characterize the Board selection process as "going in the right direction," there were some doubts as to how effectively and uniformly the process was working in practice. Some key informants, therefore, favoured a tighter, more rigorous process for soliciting and

evaluating potential candidates. There were a number of suggestions to improve the Board selection process in the future. These included, for example,

- enhancements to the statement of qualifications that would ensure that the composition of the Board includes expertise in key areas such as financial expertise, Traditional Knowledge, education, or representing different stakeholder groups (e.g., students, employers), and gender balance (recognizing that this is not easy to achieve in practice);
- additional checks and balances such as a criminal record check prior to approval of the candidate; and
- regional representation, while a generally worthy goal, was questioned in terms of its practicality by a small number of interviewees who noted that the regions are quite variable in terms of their Métis population. There were a few who suggested that the number of members of the Board could be reduced or drawn in a way that was not so closely aligned with Métis political boundaries.

b) Effectiveness

According to key informants involved in the Institute's governance, the Board of Governors has evolved significantly since 2005 toward a more appropriate role focusing on the strategic direction and policy of the Institute, rather than its management and administration. The current bylaws outline the role and responsibilities of the Board:

- To adopt policies for the effective operation of GDI;
- To formulate a strategic plan and to oversee its implementation;
- To approve annual budgets, audits and programs;
- To function as ambassadors for GDI and to encourage students and potential students in their study and career plans;
- To represent GDI to all levels of government, to Métis people, and to the public generally; and
- To appoint a Chief Executive Officer to be directly responsible for implementation of policy and the day-to-day management and operations of GDI.

To ensure accountability of the Board of Governors and GDI to the Métis people of Saskatchewan, the MN—S is responsible for monitoring of the Institute's activities to ensure that policies and programs are being implemented by the Institute in accordance with the directions of the membership.

There has been significant policy development in the last two years related to areas such as succession planning of Board members (such as three year terms, staggered to ensure continuity), Conflict of Interest/Code of Conduct guidelines, confidentiality agreement, and signing authority guidelines. These were developed by the current Board during a facilitated session. The renewed internal governance model

implemented at an Annual General Meeting of the membership of GDI is reflected in the bylaw changes that occurred in 2005. The Board has also participated in a series of professional development workshops on leadership and governance that have been offered by the provincial government. Board members have attended four sessions to date and plan to attend more in the future as they are offered.

The majority opinion among key informants, including GDI representatives and knowledgeable external partners, is that the current Board of Governors is strong and operating effectively. Its current role as a policy board is perceived to be healthy and appropriate, and clearly understood by its members. The Board is perceived to be highly committed to the best interests of GDI, professional and making a positive contribution to the success of the Institute.

Key informants also expressed great confidence in GDI's management and staff. The professionalism of the Institute is continuously improving and serves as a model of a successful Aboriginal-run organization. Many praised the faculty and staff who work diligently to serve the best interests of the Métis population. Some interviewees noted that faculty and staff could likely find jobs with better compensation elsewhere; however, they choose to work at GDI because they believe in its mandate and enjoy its culturally-affirming environment.

c) Operational Status

GDI is the official training and education affiliate of the MN—S. According to GDI's bylaws, "the Institute shall be formally a part of the MN—S Network. In addition, the Board of Governors of the Institute shall be ratified by the MN—S Board as provided hereinafter. However, the Institute shall operate as a separate entity within the parent organization and shall maintain separate offices, administration, programs and services."

Given this, key informants further characterized the relationship as being "complementary," but "arm's length" and "autonomous". A number of interviewees described the link between GDI and MN—S as an important one, and noted the potential for MN—S to make a significant contribution at the political level, as an advocate for Métis education and to lobby on behalf of GDI for conditions to allow the Institute to flourish.

As part of its new Governance Framework, the MN—S is proposing to move all affiliates, including GDI, as subsidiary companies of the MN—S under *The Métis Act*. This will alter existing relationships and will move the Institute under the control of an "MN—S Subsidiary Foundation." Under this new structure, the GDI Board will be appointed by and report to the MN—S, and federal and provincial funding for all subsidiaries (including GDI) will be transferred to the MN— and then duly distributed to GDI and other affiliates. Note that this proposal is reportedly in its preliminary stages, with much additional discussion and research necessary to substantiate the rationale for the proposal and its implications for the Institute's operation.

Key informants and GDI faculty and staff were asked to respond to the proposal in terms of its potential benefits and risks for the Institute. There were a small number of key informants who viewed the proposal as having some potential benefits for the Institute in terms of moving the operation of the Institute under the authority of *The Métis Act*, a stronger position than the contractual arrangement that is the current foundation for the Institute. The weight of opinion among key informants, however, was that there are no benefits for the Institute under the proposal, but significant risk to GDI's stability and credibility. These key informants were concerned about the proposal for two reasons. First, the current MN—S government is relatively new – elected only in June 2007 after a period of turmoil for this organization – and, therefore, perceived to lack the capacity, credibility and financial stability to readily reform its relationship with affiliates at this point in time. Second, these key informants were generally wary of closely linking a political body with a training and educational institution. This is a direction that was perceived to be out-of-step with current thinking in the area of quality assurance in education, and at odds with the operation of other educational institutions in Canada which have autonomous governance bodies. These key informants felt that moving GDI closer to a political body could precipitate governance challenges in the future.

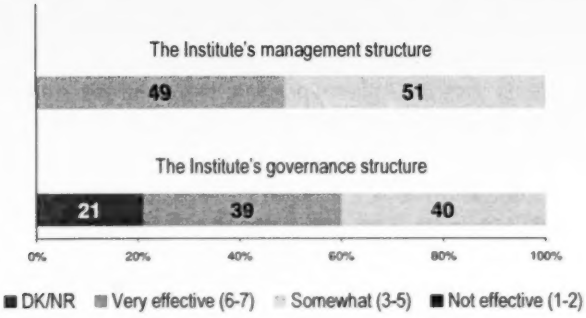
GDI faculty and staff reacting to the proposal also offered limited support. Half of faculty and staff (49 per cent) were strongly opposed to the proposal (responded 1 on a 7-point scale) and another 19 per cent were opposed to the proposal (responded 2 or 3 on the scale). One in ten supported the proposal.

d) Faculty and Staff Perspectives

The extent to which governance and management structures are effective in supporting faculty and staff at GDI was measured using a seven-point scale where one is not at all effective and seven is very effective. Of the two structures measured, the institute's management structure is seen as more effective than the governance structure by faculty and staff in supporting them. Nearly half, 49 per cent, indicated that the current management structure is very effective in this support. The institute's governance structure is seen as very effective in supporting the faculty and staff by 39 per cent of this group.

Governance and Management Structures: Faculty and Staff (1)

"To what extent is each of the following effective in supporting faculty and staff at GDI?"

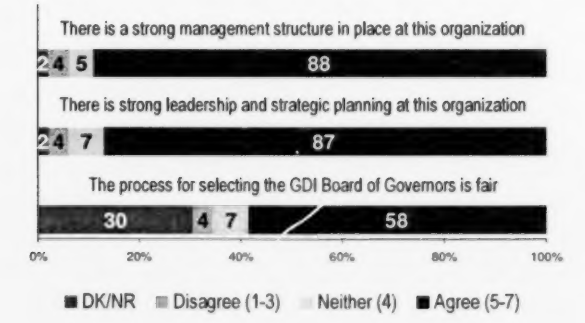


EKOS Research Associates Inc. n=43 Survey of GDI Faculty and Staff, 2008

In a related series of questions, 88 per cent of faculty and staff agreed that there is a strong management structure in place at this organization. This is followed closely by a similarly high agreement that there is strong leadership and strategic planning at this organization (87 per cent agree). Finally, 58 per cent of faculty and staff agree with the statement that the process for selecting the GDI Board of Governors is fair.

Governance and Management Structures: Faculty and Staff (2)

"For each of the following statements, please indicate whether you agree or disagree."



EKOS Research Associates Inc. n=43 Survey of GDI Faculty and Staff, 2008

Staff were asked to identify the challenges, if any, in the governance or administration of the Institute. In regards to governance, challenges include separating political interests from the functioning of GDI. Challenges mentioned in the administration of the institute include the turnover of staff and the need for increased communication.

4.7 FUNDING

In 2006-07, GDI's revenue from all sources for the three programs under study – DTI ABE and Skills Training, SUNTEP and the Publishing Department – totalled approximately $7.7 million. Key informants, particularly those who are involved in the Institute's management or governance, argued that funding for GDI is no longer adequate from an operational perspective and to meet the needs of the Métis community. An important issue for DTI, in particular, is the way in which funds are structured to flow to the Institute. First, unlike other educational institutions in the province, GDI/DTI is not recognized in legislation. GDI operates on a contractual basis with respect to provincial funding – contracts are negotiated on a five-year term. This was a sensitive issue for some who felt that GDI/DTI should have its foundation in an act, bolstering the long-term stability of the Institution.

Second, internal analyses by the Institute comparing DTI's funding with the regional colleges (its closest institutional equivalent) suggest a significant disparity in funding with respect to the provision of operational grant funding as a proportion of training program funding. In terms of program delivery, in 2005/06 DTI had a student full load equivalent of about 465 students – ranked fourth in size considering eight other regional colleges in the province (Lakeland College was excluded due to its larger size and dual campus). However, whereas in 2005-06 regional colleges received between $1.00 and $1.51 in operating grant money for every training dollar they received to pay for buildings, management and office staff, DTI received only $0.30. DTI's operational grant is the lowest by far in absolute dollars compared to all other regional colleges. The analysis demonstrates that there is unfair disparity: DTI's expectations are the same as the regional colleges in terms of fully utilizing their allotted program funds and to meet all their administrative requirements related to planning, reporting and accountability.

This funding inequity was noted to be particularly challenging in light of the Institute's provincial mandate – a mandate that demands expenditures related to travel, and staffing and facilities expenses in remote areas.[24] GDI staff and board members were troubled by the disparity and the issue has been brought to the attention of AEEL.

Key informants identified the following implications of the current funding structure and amount of funding for the Institute:

- Lack of sufficient administrative resources to manage and operate the Institute, particularly DTI;

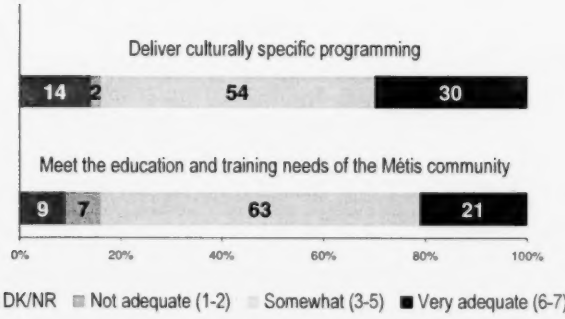
[24] Dumont Technical Institute, *Equality into the Future*, 2008.

- Wages of DTI instructors and SUNTEP faculty which do not compare favourably to other positions at other institutions or other faculties – according to data compiled by GDI, the starting annual salary for DTI instructors is about $6,000 less than Regional College instructional staff, and there is an even greater disparity at the top of the salary grid (about $17,000 excluding a long service increment that is available to Regional College instructors);
- Resources to expand the range of program options available to meet student needs and interests, and to address growth and gaps in offerings across regions; and
- (To a lesser extent) The need for capital to consolidate facilities (administrative and training facilities in Saskatoon currently located across five buildings) and a facility presence in the North.

Faculty and staff offered similarly tepid views about the adequacy of funding for the Institute. According to faculty and staff, of the two funding elements presented, one in three (30 per cent) indicate that the amount of funding available for programs and services at GDI is very adequate. One in five (21 per cent) feel that the level of funding is very adequate to meet the education and training needs of the Métis community. In terms of particular funding challenges, faculty and staff felt these comprised inadequate funding (especially compared to other educational institutions) to offer more services and serve more students and the instability of long term funding and changes of governments.

Adequacy of Funding: Faculty and Staff

"To what extent do you feel the amount of funding available for programs and services at GDI is adequate to...?"



EKOS Research Associates Inc.

n=43

Survey of GDI Faculty and Staff, 2008

5. PROGRAM IMPACTS

5.1 MOTIVATION TO ENROL

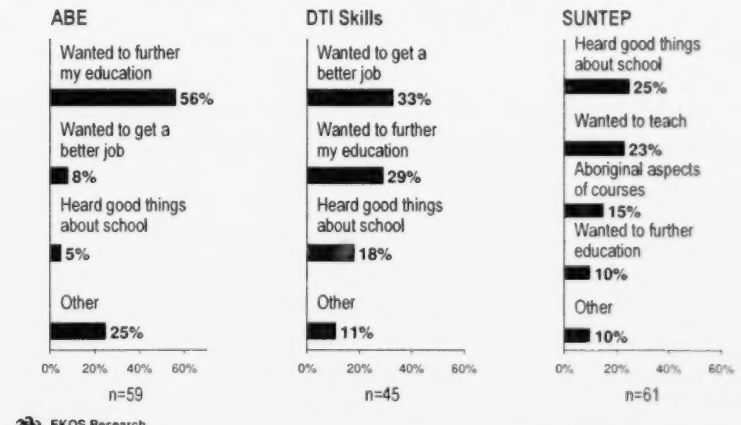
Program participants decided to enrol in their programs for a variety of reasons. The most common reason for over half (56 per cent) of ABE students was to further their education. Nearly one in ten wanted to obtain a better job, five per cent enrolled because they heard good things about the program, three per cent wanted to improve their family life or stability, and two per cent decided due to the aboriginal aspect of the courses. Twenty two per cent listed a variety of other reasons.

One-third (33 per cent) of DTI skills participants enrolled because they wanted to get a better job, followed by three in ten who wanted to further their education. Eighteen per cent enrolled in the DTI program because they heard good things about the school, four per cent wanted to improve their family life or stability, and two per cent came to the program because of the Aboriginal aspect. Another seven per cent listed other reasons and seven per cent are not sure what made them decide to enrol.

The primary reason SUNTEP participants enrolled in the program is because they heard good things about the school, with one-quarter (25 per cent) of participants providing this reason. Another 23 per cent enrolled because they wanted to teach. Nearly one in five (18 per cent) came to the SUNTEP program because they wanted to further their education, and 15 per cent, far more than mentioned in the other two programs, came to SUNTEP because of the aboriginal aspect of the courses.

Main Reason for Deciding to Enroll

"What are the main reasons why you decided to enroll in your ABE/DTI/SUNTEP program?"



EKOS Research Associates Inc.

Survey of GDI Program Participants, 2008

Participants were asked to identify the most important barriers or difficulties they were facing in achieving their work or life goals prior to their participation in their GDI program. For ABE participants, three in ten (31 per cent) mentioned lack of education or Grade 12. Compared to DTI and SUNTEP participants, ABE participants listed a greater variety of other barriers they were facing in achieving their goals. These included child care (17 per cent), lack of confidence/motivation (12 per cent), financial difficulties (12 per cent), lack of transportation (12 per cent), lack of housing (10 per cent), and lack of work experience (12 per cent) and literacy difficulties (seven per cent). ABE participants were more likely than participants in other programs to find childcare, housing, transportation, confidence, and motivation to be barriers. While ABE participants identified such a variety of difficulties, they also had a high proportion of participants indicate that they had no difficulties or barriers (29 per cent).

Participants in DTI skills programs listed financial difficulties (22 per cent) most often as their barrier in achieving their life goals, followed closely by lack of education (31 per cent). One in ten or less mention childcare, lack of job opportunities, personal/health issues, or literacy difficulties. Twenty-four per cent indicated that they had no difficulties in achieving their work or life goals.

SUNTEP participants have experienced a similar array of barriers as DTI participants. One-quarter (26 per cent) mentioned financial difficulties, followed by lack of education (21 per cent). Eleven per cent identified relationship, personal, or family issues as a barrier. Five per cent or less mentioned childcare, health issues, lack of transportation, or lack of job opportunities as difficulties for them.

Table 4.1: Barriers/Difficulties

	"Before enrolling at DTI/SUNTEP, what were the most significant barriers or difficulties you were facing in achieving your work or life goals?"		
	ABE (n=59)	DTI SKILLS (n=45)	SUNTEP (n=61)
Lack of education qualifications/lack of grade 12	31	22	21
Financial difficulties/issues	12	22	26
Child care	17	9	5
Lack of transportation	12	2	3
Lack of work experience	12	11	0
Lack of confidence/motivation	12	0	0
Lack of housing	10	2	0
Relationship/personal/family issues	7	2	11
Literacy difficulties	7	4	0
Personal Health issues	7	4	3
Addiction-related (alcohol, drugs)	2	0	0
Lack of job opportunities	2	7	2
None, no difficulties or barriers	29	24	26

Source: GDI Participant Survey, 2008

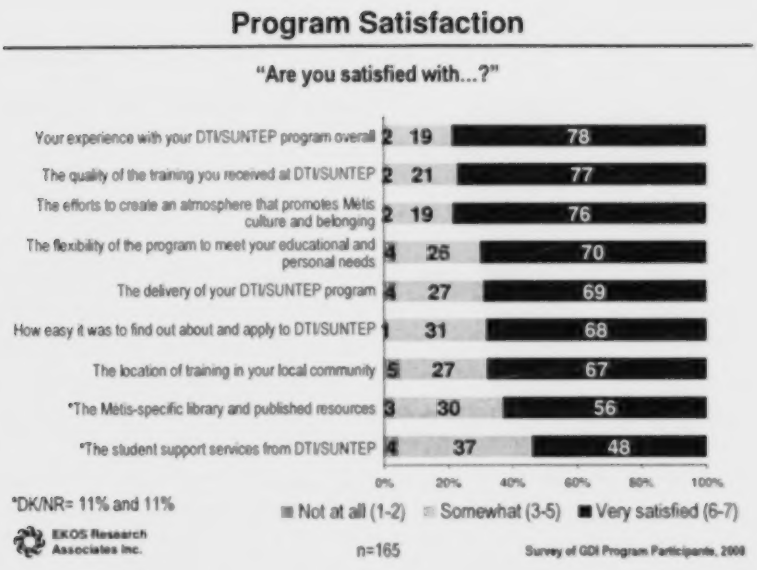
5.2 PROGRAM SATISFACTION

The participants were asked to rate their level of satisfaction on eight attributes of the DTI or SUNTEP program, followed by their satisfaction with the overall experience in their respective program. Satisfaction was rated on a seven point scale a 7-point scale where 1 means not satisfied, 7 means very satisfied and the midpoint 4 means moderately satisfied.

Overall, the participant's experience in their program achieved a satisfaction rating of 78 per cent. Students who graduated in 2004-2005 were less satisfied with the program overall compared to those who completed their program more recently. Among the attributes of the program, the quality of training received in their program received the highest rating of 77 per cent very satisfied. The second highest rated attribute of the program was the efforts to create an atmosphere that promotes Métis culture and belonging, with 76 per cent of participants very satisfied. Again, those who completed their program in 2004-2005 were less satisfied than those who completed later. Additionally, participants in the SUNTEP program were more satisfied with this cultural element, while those in the DTI skills programs were less satisfied. Seventy per cent were very satisfied with the flexibility of the program to meet the student's educational and personal needs, while 69 per cent were satisfied with the delivery of their program. .

Nearly seven in ten (67 per cent) participants were very satisfied with the location of training in their local community. Students in the SUNTEP program were most satisfied (82 per cent). Unexpectedly, despite much of DTI's training being community-based, those in the DTI programs provided the lowest ratings (51 per cent very satisfied) for the location of training in their community (though possibly this is, in fact, a rating of the quality of the facility in the community, not the location of the training). This is followed closely by the ease of finding out about and applying to their respective GDI program (68 per cent very satisfied).

Satisfaction with the Métis-specific library and published resources is among the lowest of the attributes measured, with 56 per cent of participants very satisfied. Finally, forty-eight per cent of participants are very satisfied with the student support services from GDI. These two ratings experienced the highest proportion of participants indicating "don't know"; therefore, the lack of use of these services by some participants could be contributing to the lower ratings. Additionally, SUNTEP students were more apt to be satisfied with both of these attributes, with DTI students pulling the combined ratings lower.


Program Satisfaction
"Are you satisfied with...?"
Your experience with your DTI/SUNTEP program overall 2 19 78
The quality of the training you received at DTI/SUNTEP 2 21 77
The efforts to create an atmosphere that promotes Métis culture and belonging 2 19 76
The flexibility of the program to meet your educational and personal needs 4 26 70
The delivery of your DTI/SUNTEP program 4 27 69
How easy it was to find out about and apply to DTI/SUNTEP 1 31 68
The location of training in your local community 5 27 67
*The Métis-specific library and published resources 3 30 56
*The student support services from DTI/SUNTEP 4 37 48
0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%
*DK/NR= 11% and 11%
Not at all (1-2) Somewhat (3-5) Very satisfied (6-7)
EKOS Research Associates Inc.
n=165
Survey of GDI Program Participants, 2008

After having participated in their relevant GDI program, most participants would select their program again. Knowing what they know now, 97 per cent of SUNTEP students would select their program again, followed by 93 per cent of ABE, and 89 per cent of DTI skills participants. Of the very few who would not choose the program again, reasons included that they could not find a job with it, could not get into the course they wanted, or that they did not feel they had enough support from teachers. Similarly, almost all GDI participants (98 per cent) would recommend their program to a friend or family member interested in adult upgrading opportunities, technical, or teacher training programs.

5.3 Discontinuation Rate

Most participants completed the full program for which they were enrolled. Reflecting the program administrative data,[25] surveyed participants enrolled in the SUNTEP and DTI Skills Training programs are less likely to have discontinued their program (10 and 11 per cent respectively) compared to those in ABE (34 per cent). A small proportion, one per cent, reported that they left the program before completion, but returned later. Finally, 11 per cent of all participants interviewed, mostly from the SUNTEP program (21 per cent) say their studies are in progress.

Among those who discontinued their program, the most common reasons for leaving included family/health/personal reasons (31 per cent); financial difficulties/lack of support (14 per cent); or to take a job or other education program (12 per cent).

[25] Based on program administrative data, 37 per cent of DTI ABE participants discontinued their training compared to 11 per cent of DTI Skills Training participants.

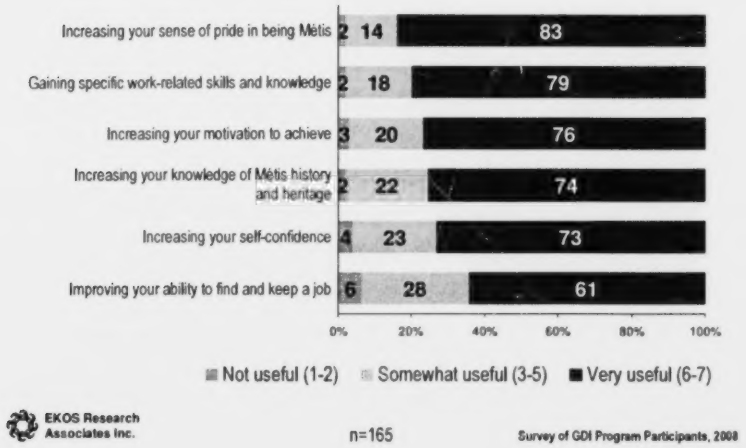
5.4 Perceived Benefits of the GDI Program

In order to gain an understanding of the impact of the program, participants were asked to rate how useful their DTI/SUNTEP program has been in building certain skills and experiences. Each factor was rated on a 7 point scale where 1 means not at all useful, 7 means extremely useful and the mid-point 4 means somewhat useful.

The strongest-rated impact of the program was in increasing the participant's sense of pride in being Métis, with most (83 per cent) participants indicating that this was very useful to them. Participants also found their program very useful in gaining specific work-related skills and knowledge (79 per cent). ABE students were less apt to find the program useful (64 per cent very useful) in gaining work related skills than other participants, with SUNTEP students proving the highest ratings in this aspect (89 per cent very useful). Three-quarters (76 per cent) of participants feel that their program was very useful in increasing their motivation to achieve.

Seventy-three per cent of participants felt that the program was very useful in increasing their self-confidence. Those who completed their program in 2004-2005 were less likely to indicate that the program was useful in increasing their self-confidence than those who completed the program more recently. Seventy-four per cent also indicate that the program was very useful in increasing their knowledge of Métis history and heritage. DTI participants rated this cultural aspect lowest (51 per cent very useful), while SUNTEP students provided the highest ratings (93 per cent very satisfied). Finally, 61 per cent of participants indicated that their program was very useful in improving their ability to find and keep a job. Not shown in the chart, 85 per cent of SUNTEP participants said that the program was very useful in increasing their sensitivity to the needs of Aboriginal students.

Perceived Benefits of Program


Increasing your sense of pride in being Métis
2 14 83
Gaining specific work-related skills and knowledge
2 18 79
Increasing your motivation to achieve
3 20 76
Increasing your knowledge of Métis history and heritage
2 22 74
Increasing your self-confidence
4 23 73
Improving your ability to find and keep a job
6 28 61
0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%
Not useful (1-2) Somewhat useful (3-5) Very useful (6-7)

EKOS Research Associates Inc.

n=165

Survey of GDI Program Participants, 2008

5.5 Employment Outcomes

a) Employment

The majority of participants have been employed since their involvement in the program, with DTI Skills (86 per cent) and SUNTEP (84 per cent) participants more likely to have worked since their programs and ABE students least likely (51 per cent). This is consistent with the more challenging profile of ABE participants (lack of formal education, greater barriers) and also that ABE is a transition program to enable participants to upgrade basic skills to later move into Skills Training.

The majority of those who found employment have worked at one or two different positions. Of all ABE participants surveyed, 31 per cent are currently working full time and six per cent are working part time or seasonal. ABE participants are more likely than other participants to indicate that they are currently a student (33 per cent). Eighteen per cent are unemployed and looking for work.

Half of DTI Skills Training participants are currently working full time, with another eight per cent working part time. While one in five (20 per cent) are currently unemployed and looking for work, DTI participants are more likely than others to indicate that they are unemployed and not looking for work (10 per cent). Finally, over half of SUNTEP students are employed full time (56 per cent), more so than the two other participant groups measured. Additionally, 16 per cent of SUNTEP students are currently a student and 15 per cent are employed part time.

Table 4.2: Employment Outcomes

	PROGRAM TYPE		
	ABE(n=39) (%)	DTI Skills(n=40) (%)	SUNTEP (n=55) (%)
Have you worked at a full-time or part-time job or worked at your own business since you finished your DTI/SUNTEP?			
Yes	49	85	84
No	51	15	16
What is your employment status right now?			
Self-employed	0	0	2
Employed full-time	31	53	56
Employed part-time	3	8	15
Employed casual	3	3	7
Unemployed and looking for work	18	20	4
Unemployed and NOT looking for work	8	10	0
Student	33	0	16
On leave (maternity, disability)	5	5	0
Homemaker	0	0	0
How many different employment positions have you had since your program ended?			
1	53	47	42
2	26	24	35
3 or more	21	26	16

Source: GDI Survey of Participants, 2008. Includes only those who did not discontinue their program.
Post-program figures exclude discontinuants

The small sample size for the survey restricts the types of analyses that could be done to examine differences among sub-groups in terms of employment outcomes. Still, there are some results that are indicative; for example, DTI Skills Training participants living in the north of the province (living north of Prince Albert) are less likely to have been employed in the post-program period compared to those in the larger centres and in the South. Within the DTI ABE program, men have a higher rate of unemployment than women although this is not because women are more apt to be working, but rather they are more likely to go onto further studies.

Among participants who had not found work since completing their program, four in ten say they have experienced no particular problems in finding employment (likely because they have been out of the labour market to pursue additional studies or on a leave). The most common barriers to finding employment included: lack of education/skills (14 per cent overall, but slightly higher for DTI ABE participants); no jobs available in their field/lack of opportunities (14 per cent overall, but higher among DTI skills participants). One in ten or less mentioned a health/disability problem, person/family issues, lack of work experience, and lack of childcare.

b) Job Characteristics

With respect to their current job (or most recent job if the respondent was subsequently unemployed), on average, half of all participants who are currently employed are working as a permanent or regular employee (58 per cent of ABE, 71 per cent of DTI, and 37 per cent of SUNTEP). DTI skills participants are more apt to indicate that their job is permanent. SUNTEP participants have a higher propensity to be working as a term employee (47 per cent) compared to ABE (11 per cent) or DTI participants (12 per cent). Most are in full-time jobs.

Congruently, SUNTEP participants are more likely to be working in teaching positions than other participants, with 72 per cent reporting that they are employed in teaching, working with youth, or counselling positions. DTI skills participants are more apt to be working in trades or trucking (35 per cent) or health services (29 per cent). ABE students report working in a variety of positions, including; trades or trucking, retail, teaching or working with youth or counselling (16 per cent each), and health services (11 per cent).

The average weekly wage of the participants' current position is highest among SUNTEP students ($783), followed by DTI skills participants ($730), and ABE participants ($609). Comparing this to the pre-program wages, all program participants have made a discernible gain in their income. SUNTEP graduates report the largest increase when measuring against their pre-program weekly wage of $444 (a $339 increase each week or $11 an hour). This is followed by the gain made by ABE participants from their pre-program wage of $371 (a $238 weekly increase or $5 an hour), and DTI skills participants from $579 weekly (a $151 weekly gain or $3 an hour). As noted in section 2.2 of this report, all pre-program average wages have been adjusted to reflect 2007 values.

Table 4.3: Profile of Current/Most Recent Job

	ABE (n=19) (%)	DTI Skills (n=34) (%)	SUNTEP (n=43) (%)
Is this job...?			
Permanent or regular employee	58	71	37
Seasonal employee	11	15	5
Term employee	11	12	47
Casual or on-call employee	16	3	12
How many hours per week do you usually work at this job...?			
Less than 30 hours	26	18	23
More than 30 hours	64	82	70
DK/NR	11	0	7
How much do you usually earn before deductions?			
Mean (weekly)	$609	$730	$783
Mean (hourly)	$17.1	$17.5	$24.4

	ABE (n=19) (%)	DTI Skills (n=34) (%)	SUNTEP (n=43) (%)
How satisfied are you with your current job?			
Not at all (1-2)	0	0	2
Somewhat (3-5)	32	24	28
Very satisfied (6-7)	63	74	70
How long have you been at this job?			
In months	6.3	10.2	16.0

Source: GDI Participant Survey, 2008
Post-program figures exclude discontinuants

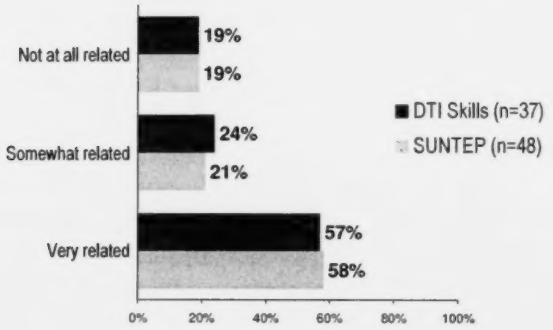
Of the participants who are currently working, most are very satisfied with their current job. ABE participants are the least satisfied with their current position (63 per cent very satisfied). SUNTEP students are slightly more satisfied with 70 per cent very satisfied, while DTI participants, at 74 per cent, report the highest satisfaction with their current job.

c) Program Incrementality

DTI skills and SUNTEP graduates were asked about how related their current or most recent job is to their respective program. About six in ten in both groups indicated that their current position is very related to their DTI/SUNTEP program. One in five feel that it is somewhat related, while another 15 to 16 per cent are working in jobs that are not at all related to the content of their DTI or SUNTEP program respectively. The match between education and training and current job is somewhat lower for DTI/SUNTEP participants compared to response from Saskatchewan post-graduate follow-up survey (across the province 73 and 82 per cent of DTI-similar and SUNTEP-similar 2005-06 graduates respectively indicated that their job was very related to their program of study). Again, this may be the result the more challenging labour market conditions in the North of the province or the variability in the timing of the survey with respect to graduation.

Program Incrementality (1)

"Overall, how related is your current (most recent) job to your DTI/SUNTEP program. Would you say, very related, somewhat related or not at all related?"



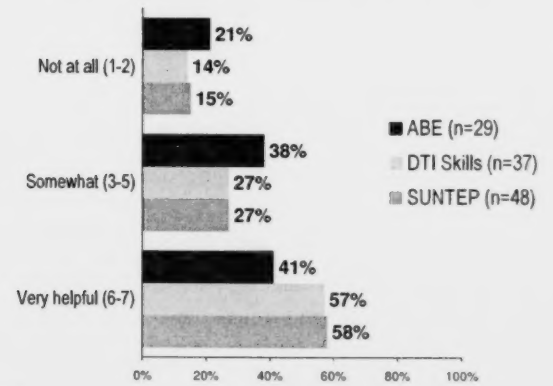
EKOS Research Associates Inc.

Survey of GDI Program Participants, 2008

Six in ten GDI participants who are currently working felt that the experience, skills and support they received through their program was helpful in obtaining their current position. Only one in ten report that these factors were not at all helpful in getting their job.

Program Incrementality (2)

"To what extent was the experience, skills and support you got through your DTI/SUNTEP program helpful in getting this job?"



EKOS Research Associates Inc.

Survey of GDI Program Participants, 2008

d) Intensity of Employment

Over the last year, SUNTEP students have been working the most weeks, with an average of 33 weeks of the year. DTI participants follow at 27 weeks, and ABE participants have worked an average of 13 weeks (an increase over the pre-program period). Among all participants, whether they are currently employed or not, ABE students spent the most time actively looking for work, with an average of 11 weeks in the last year. SUNTEP and DTI follow, both reporting an average of six and seven weeks actively looking for work.

Table 4.4: Work Intensity Outcomes of GDI Participants

	ABE		DTI Skills		SUNTEP	
	12 Months Prior to Program (n=52) (%)	Last 12 months (n=39) (%)	12 Months Prior to Program (n=43) (%)	Last 12 months (n=40) (%)	12 Months Prior to Program (n=61) (%)	Last 12 months (n=55) (%)
Weeks working						
Mean	8.2	12.5	23.9	27.9	32.9	32.9
Weeks looking for work						
Mean	13.7	11.4	13.9	6.6	4.3	5.7

Source: GDI Participant Survey, 2008
Post-program figures exclude discontinuants

e) Use of Public Income Support

Currently, fifteen per cent of ABE participants are collecting social assistance. A further five per cent of ABE participants are collecting employment insurance. Twenty-one per cent of DTI Skills Training participants are currently receiving either social assistance or employment insurance, with an additional three per cent collecting workers compensation. SUNTEP participants are more likely to not be collecting any assistance, with only two per cent indicating that they are receiving employment insurance.

Of students who disclosed how many months they have been on social assistance in the last year, SUNTEP participants report that they were not on assistance for any time, DTI Skills Training participants were on social assistance for just over a month, and ABE participants report the highest post-program assistance period of two months.

Table 4.5: Use of Public Income Support

	PROGRAM TYPE		
	ABE (n=39) (%)	DTI Skills (n=40) (%)	SUNTEP (n=55) (%)
Are you currently collecting...?			
Social assistance	15	13	0
Employment insurance	5	8	2
Worker's Compensation	0	3	0
None	79	78	98
Since finishing your DTI/SUNTEP program, have you ever collected social assistance (welfare)?			
Yes	38	25	5
No	59	75	91
Since finishing your DTI/SUNTEP program, have you ever collected EI (employment insurance)?			
Yes	8	18	13
No	90	83	84
Months on social assistance			
Mean	1.97	1.29	0.00

Source: GDI Participant Survey, 2008
Post-program figures exclude discontinuants

f) Further Education

One in five participants (21 per cent – similar across the program groups) took other education or training since finishing their DTI/SUNTEP program. About half of these participants went on to take other training through SIAST or a regional college, 18 per cent at a university, and 12 per cent each at GDI/DTI or another Aboriginal institution. The most commonly cited areas of study were education, health/sciences and business studies/management.

g) Barriers to Participation and Success

Eight in ten participants indicated that they did not experience any difficulties in participating in their program (the small number who did so cited financial challenges and personal/family issues). GDI faculty and staff were asked to consider the barriers, if any, to student participation and success in GDI training and education programs. While a few (14 per cent) feel that there are no barriers, others mention a range of obstacles to students. Many barriers mentioned included material needs such as funding, housing, and childcare. A collection of social or personal issues were also identified, including low self-esteem, addictions, lack of academic background or lack of success in traditional educational systems, and lack of family or other support.

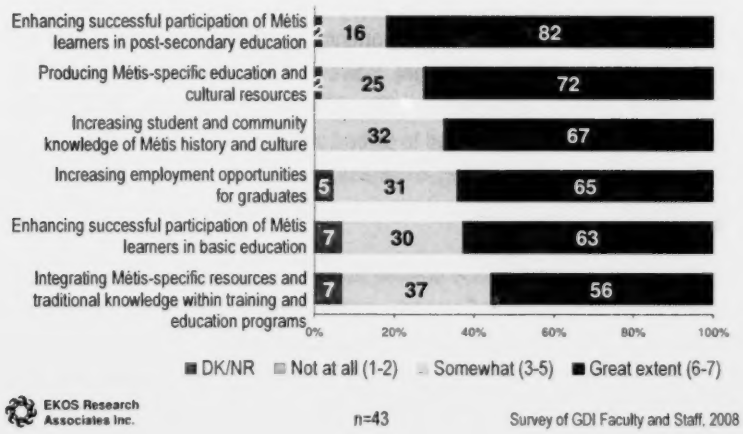
One-third of participants offered suggestions for improving the program that they participated in. Very few suggestions were mentioned with any frequency. One in ten specified that the courses should be longer, more in depth, or offered on different dates. Six per cent said there should be different locations or better facilities. Five per cent each indicated that there should be higher pay for professors or better teachers and that student services should be better promoted (higher among SUNTEP students). Other suggestions included more Métis-specific content, student housing should be available, and less demanding schedule.

5.6 Faculty and Staff Perspective

Of six intended objectives of GDI measured, most faculty and staff feel that they are being met to a great extent. The objective that most staff feel GDI is achieving to a great extent is enhancing the successful participation of Métis learners in post-secondary education (82 per cent indicate this is being met to a great extent). Seventy-two per cent feel that GDI is meeting its intended objective of producing Métis-specific education and cultural resources to a great extent. Two-thirds (67 per cent) indicate that the objective of increasing student and community knowledge of Métis history and culture is being met to a great extent, followed by increasing employment opportunities for graduates (65 per cent) and enhancing successful participation of Métis learners in basic education (63 per cent). Over half (56 per cent) feel that integrating Métis-specific resources and Traditional Knowledge within training and education programs is being achieved to a great extent.

GDI Meeting Intended Objectives: Faculty and Staff

"To what extent do you think GDI is meeting its intended objectives in the following areas?"



EKOS Research Associates Inc.

n=43

Survey of GDI Faculty and Staff, 2008

5.7 Unanticipated Impacts

For key informants, the most often mentioned unanticipated impact of GDI programs has been the "ripple effect" of successful GDI graduates on their families and on their community. According to key informants, graduates themselves become role models and leaders, having a positive influence on other members of the Métis community, as well as the broader population in Saskatchewan. Another example of the "ripple effect" that was cited by some key informants is the impact of SUNTEP-trained teachers on the school system and the student body. SUNTEP teachers bring unique skills and knowledge to their positive, which is viewed as having a positive influence on the school system, other teachers and Métis and non-Métis students. A second reported, unintended and positive impact of GDI/DTI is community economic development. The community-based delivery of training, a hallmark of DTI, is said to not only contribute to access and program success among students (its intended impact), but also supports community economic development through rental of community facilities, and local hiring and purchases.

One third of GDI faculty and staff feel that there have been unintended impacts, whether positive or negative, of GDI programs. Most impacts are positive and include the impact on families of successful students, the improved self esteem of Métis who have gained a sense of identity through the program, and the international exposure that GDI is receiving due to the success of the institute, and its programs, and graduates. The positive impact of graduates on the economy was also mentioned.

5.8 Role of GDI in the Métis Community

When asked what is the nature or importance of the role of GDI in the Métis community, many key informants were quite effusive in their praise for the Institute. GDI was variously described as a "shining star", a "prize gem", "flagship" and "jewel in the crown". Within the Métis community, the Institute was perceived to play a practical role in providing an opportunity for Métis people to access credible training and education within a culturally-affirming environment. However, GDI also reportedly has a role in reinforcing pride by enhancing the knowledge about and visibility of the Métis community and its heritage and history. Moreover, the importance of GDI was perceived to extend beyond the local provincial Métis community; GDI is a unique Métis-driven educational institution in Canada, and is therefore a source of pride among Métis in other provinces.

Faculty and staff were similarly positive about the role and importance of GDI. They view the role of GDI within the Métis community in Saskatchewan as one of empowering Métis people to learn about their culture and succeed in improving their lives. As one respondent articulated, the "education of Métis students and training programs (are) very important (in) that we give the students confidence and improve their quality of life". To further elaborate, another stated, "for some Métis people, GDI is the only connection they have to their Métis culture, the only place where they can find acceptance in a formal education institute". This connection, acceptance, and cultural affirmation helps students to succeed in their programs and in life. This program success was viewed as helping to increase the employability of the Métis people

and train them "into a career, not just a job". Finally, staff indicated that Métis people take pride in GDI because it is "very respected in the community and among its peer organizations".

6. STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

6.1 STRENGTHS

On the whole, evaluation participants were supportive and positive with respect to GDI – its existence as a unique institution and model for Métis-specific education in Canada. They were also satisfied with the Institute's current direction which is perceived to emphasize strategic planning, sensitivity to community needs, willingness to collaborate with other institutions, including a federation agreement to deliver nationally-accredited training, as well as being attentive to governance and accountability.

Specific notable strengths of GDI include, first, the cultural mandate of the Institute, including its expression in education and training program delivery, and the development of learning and cultural resources through the Publishing Department. A majority of key informants noted the cultural component as a key distinctive feature of GDI, and was deemed critical to the success of students, and their sense of belonging and cultural pride. This view is confirmed in the literature which shows that Aboriginal-driven education and integration of Aboriginal perspectives in curriculum are positively associated with student success.[26]

Second, many interviewees pointed to the current Board of Governors and faculty and staff as a strength of the institution. These individuals were described as being of high quality and very dedicated to the success of the Institute. Participants themselves also most frequently identified their instructors as the "best thing about their program" (see below). The majority of the Institute's staff are Métis, and this was viewed as being important to understanding DTI/SUNTEP students and contributing to the culturally-affirming environment of the Institute. Again, the strength of the relationship between instructors and students has been highlighted in the literature as a key factor for Aboriginal student success, as well as in adult education generally.

Third, a number of key informant respondents praised the supports that have been put in place for holistic, client-centred programming – for example, smaller class sizes, individual attention from faculty and staff and access to ancillary services such as counselling and tutoring. Offering an array of support services to assist students to adequately prepare for their studies and address any potential barriers to success also aligns closely with best practices noted in the literature. Practical assistance and guidance around finances, in particular, but also other issues such as housing and childcare have been identified as important elements to bolster positive education outcomes. Post-employment support has also been found to be important to job retention.

---

[26] EKOS Research, Evaluation of the Gabriel Dumont Institute, Review of the Literature, submitted under separate cover, 2008.

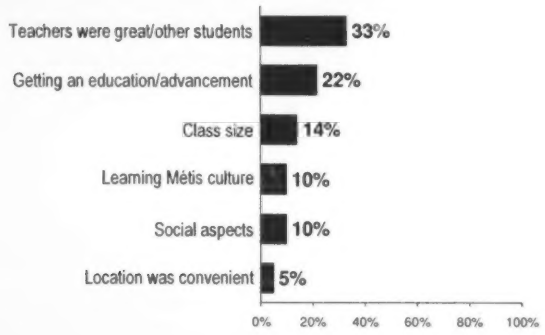
Other strengths, each noted by several respondents, included:

- Community-based delivery of training and education, which locates training within the familiar surroundings of participants to enhance access and success;
- Flexibility and responsiveness, both to the community and employer needs (as evidenced by some of the employer agreements with SaskEnergy and Saskatchewan Highways) and capacity as a small organization to be nimble and react quickly to new program opportunities; and
- Credibility of the institution. GDI is a stable, and enduring educational institution in the province that has been successful in building credibility, and has a successful track record with the Métis community and partners.

According to GDI faculty and staff, one of the most important key strengths that contributes to the successful delivery of culturally-specific education and training programs is the practice of hiring qualified Métis staff, which contributed to the culturally-affirming environment of the institute, and provides role models for participants. This practice is supported by Institute policy, a Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission exemption to hire qualified Métis, and the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Institute and the Saskatchewan Government and General Employees Union. As one respondent stated, the key strength is the staff, "they are very experienced, know what they are doing, and are very dedicated". Other key strengths mentioned by staff include student supports, community involvement, access to Métis publications, staff with Métis-language knowledge, and the use of small class settings.

Program participants were asked about the best aspects of their DTI/SUNTEP program. One in three participants indicated that the best part of the program was their teachers. Among ABE participants, a further 19 per cent specified that getting an education was the best part, followed by the social aspects of the classroom (14 per cent). In addition to effective instructors and meeting other students, DTI Skills Training participants felt that the best part of their education was getting an education (16 per cent), followed by the career training or advancement (13 per cent). While SUNTEP participants also mentioned the teachers and students first, these participants were more apt to also mention the class size (28 per cent), and learning about Métis culture (21 per cent) as the best parts of their experience. Only seven per cent of ABE students, and no DTI Skills Training participants, mentioned the Métis cultural aspect.

Best Things About DTI/SUNTEP



EKOS Research Associates Inc.

n=165

Survey of GDI Program Participants, 2008

6.2 Challenges/Suggestions for Improvement

By far the challenges for GDI mentioned most frequently by key informants and by faculty and staff related to funding of the Institute and to ensuing limitations on both GDI's operations and programming. For some evaluation participants, the challenge of funding was focused on insufficient support for the management and operation of the Institute. Others also linked funding to the ability of GDI to respond to the needs of Métis learners and the labour market. Funding, therefore, is an overarching issue for GDI and DTI that is at play in a number of other challenges for the Institute. More specific challenges are discussed below.

a) Program Array

While evaluation participants generally approved of the programming model that has been adopted by GDI and DTI, there were a number of gaps in the Institute's programs and services that were identified by key informants and faculty and staff. These include:

Student Support Services

Access to student support services is one of the elements that distinguishes GDI from mainstream institutions, and some felt the Institute could better promote and expand these types of

services. The participant data show that use of existing student supports is uneven, with SUNTEP students tending to access these services more often than DTI students.

With respect to enhancements, some key informants suggested providing additional services to support students' transition from the classroom to the workplace. As well, a number of interviewees, and surveyed faculty and staff noted that the Institute could be better positioned to help address barriers often experienced by students – such as financing, childcare, and housing. This is consistent with the survey data that shows, for example, that four in ten DTI participants have children. Saskatchewan's recent economic surge and growing population have also had significant consequences for housing – higher housing prices and rent, and low rental vacancy rates.

Enhancement of student services could be based on stronger alliances with other community-based organizations (e.g., housing, childcare) or in-house student support services (e.g., student advisors/counsellors who provide career guidance, are geographically-based, assist transitions to employment, and focus on essential skills).

Programming

In general, there was a need expressed by some key informants and faculty and staff to offer greater diversity in programming to Métis students and some specific areas where there were perceived gaps. First, there were a number of comments with respect to expanding the SUNTEP program to include education of secondary school teachers or an avenue for SUNTEP graduates to pursue Master's level studies through the program. The current contract between GDI and the universities includes research funds to explore program development options such as these.

Second, if funds were available, evaluation participants raised the possibility of offering other degree programs at the undergraduate or graduate level. Note that, in fact, the Gabriel Dumont College provides other university level training, but only the first two years and this program has never received core funding from the province. There is also a three-year graduate studies pilot project funded independently by the GDC currently underway with seven graduate students (Master's and PhD) participating in this program).

Finally, there were a number of suggestions to diversify the offerings on the DTI Skills Training side – literacy, business curricula, apprenticeship training and expanded training in health occupations. There are currently efforts underway to research expanded programming such as dental assisting. Lack of core funding for Skills Training programs, however, limits the extent to which programs can be offered on a consistent basis and new programs launched. Surveyed participants also indicated that they would welcome greater flexibility in GDI programming – while most said they would take the same program if they had to do it over again, some urged that programs be longer, more in-depth or available at different locations and times.

Cultural Education

Mentioned to a lesser extent, some key informants would like to see greater emphasis on the cultural aspects of GDI's mission. Language, for example, is perceived to be an important but challenging area to promote and incorporate into training and education given the small number of Michif-speaking instructors.[27] According to interviewees, additional avenues to support Métis culture include, for example, exploring the feasibility of a Métis Cultural Centre or events to provide venues and learning opportunities for cultural knowledge and practices such as Métis dance, fiddling, and beading. A small number also urged exploring greater integration of Métis materials and resources in the core K-12 curriculum in the province.

b) Governance

After funding, a second challenge noted by key informants is the governance of the Institute. As noted previously, key informants were generally pleased with the direction of the Institute in the area of governance and accountability. Policy development and professional development in these areas has been quite significant in the last two years. However, many key informants suggested these areas require continued vigilance and ongoing attention. There were some suggestions to improve the process of selecting board members (e.g., education qualifications, criminal record check) for instance. In the survey, some faculty and staff also noted the relationship between the MN—S and GDI as a challenge, given the prior political instability of the MN—S. A number viewed the current lack of legislative foundation for the operation of the Institute as a weakness and expressed a desire for GDI to operate under an act to ensure its long-term survival.

c) Management and Administration

Overall, evaluation study participants expressed confidence in GDI management and, as mentioned previously, the current Board and staff are perceived as a strength of the Institute. There were, however, some comments by key informants from GDI about challenges related to the internal operations of the Institute – for example, weaknesses in internal communications. Feedback from the survey of faculty and staff also indicate that communications among departments is also an issue for staff, and merits further attention.

With the signing of a $22.1 million Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreement (AHRDA) with the federal government (January 2007) and the creation of GDI Training and Employment, the Institute has experienced significant growth in the last year (in effect, doubling its size). With this rapid growth, the fact that the Institute is physically located across five office buildings in Saskatoon, and much of the delivery of education and training programs is decentralized, has brought some organizational challenges.

---

[27] According to Statistics Canada, four per cent of Métis people in Canada spoke an Aboriginal language in 2006 (somewhat higher among rural dwellers and older Métis people).

Further, there was an identified need for additional management and human resources capacity at GDI. This issue is closely linked to the disparity in operational funding of DTI noted previously which was reported to have a negative impact on DTI's capacity to carry out its planning and reporting responsibilities. However, there were other management issues such as the absence of an integrated student information system. Indeed, this evaluation was hampered by the lack of a comprehensive database of former program participants and adequate information to enable follow-up in the longer term. Faculty and staff also mentioned a number of other areas such as improved computer systems and library access.

Finally, staffing in a tight labour market and for remote locations was noted as an operations-related challenge. Staffing issues were linked, as well, to the Institute's funding. Recruiting quality staff was perceived to be a challenge by some key informants due to a lack of wage parity between, for example, DTI and SUNTEP instructors and instructors at other comparable educational institutions (and salaries, in fact, do not compare favourably with regional college instructors). In addition, there were a number of comments from faculty and staff who were surveyed for the evaluation about the need for a more competitive salary package, as well as ongoing professional development, to attract highly-qualified personnel.

d) Awareness and Marketing

Boosting awareness and marketing the Institute is an area that is being considered in the Institute's current strategic planning, and these evaluation results support a need to further explore this area. There are no indicators available to measure general awareness levels of GDI and its programming within the Métis community (and this is likely to vary by region) or the extent to which recruitment activities for DTI's various programs and SUNTEP are penetrating the potential student market for programs in communities. DTI's revolving and sometimes sporadic program offerings in the regions represent a particular challenge in fostering program awareness and undertaking recruitment with each program cycle.

Word of mouth is the most common source of awareness of their program cited by past participants in the survey. This current reliance on informal methods of awareness could be better balanced with dedicated awareness and recruitment activities to reach those who are not currently 'in the loop' with respect to this grassroots awareness. It should also be noted that, if current participation rates remain stable, post-secondary enrollments in Saskatchewan are expected to have peaked in 2006/07 and are now entering a period of decline.[28] Thus, competition for students and strategies to increase institutions' visibility and appeal to potential students seems a likely consequence.

There were some suggestions by key informants to increase awareness of GDI through a more diversified approach to promotion (e.g., more effective utilization of media, though not necessarily mainstream newspapers), as well as targeting within the K-12 system. There were other suggestions for more targeted objectives – for example, enticing men to enter the SUNTEP program (or offering a broader

[28] Hango, Darcy and Patrice de Broucker, Statistics Canada, Culture, Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics, Postsecondary Enrolment Trends to 2031: Three Scenarios (2007).

array of university programming), promoting GDI/DTI during community events in which Métis people participate, and having partner organizations more involved in promoting GDI programs.

The literature review confirms that effective recruitment of Aboriginal learners is a critical first step in supporting student success. Targeting recruitment initiatives to early high school students has been identified as a best practice in employment programming (in addition to other strategies such as dedicated personnel, consistent messages, communication of the benefits of post-secondary education, and career awareness and preparation).

e) Partnerships

Due to its moderate size, **the** geographical distribution of the Métis population and delivery of accredited Skills Training, partnerships with other educational institutions in the province are integral to the operation and success of GDI/DTI. The Institute has built strong partnerships with the province's universities, SIAST and some of the regional colleges. Partnerships with other regional colleges, particularly in the south of the province, have been less robust. While there has been some previous experience with employer partnerships (e.g., with SaskEnergy), there was a lower level of awareness of these relationships among key informants, and faculty and staff also rated employer partnerships as somewhat less effective compared to the Institute's other relationships. Some key informants urged GDI to be more "creative and clever" to expand its partnership efforts with employers, including those employers such as school boards and health regions that hire many of DTI's/SUNTEP's graduates, but also in the private sector. The province's current labour shortage lends itself well to increased motivation for such partnerships and conditions for success, which benefit both the employer and workers.

f) Provincial Mandate and Community-Based Training

GDI's mandate is to serve Métis people across all of Saskatchewan. On the training and education side, this is accomplished through community-based delivery of training. Situating the delivery of training in small and often northern communities in the province where many Métis people live enables ready access to programming and contributes to program retention as participants can remain in their home community during their studies. The literature further confirms this: lessons learned about program delivery show that, for students, community-based training eliminated relocation costs and social support systems remain in place. Given that a significant portion of DTI students have children, community-based training minimizes the possibility that family responsibilities will jeopardize program completion.

There are a number of identified challenges associated with community-based programming, however: administration costs for the Institute; securing appropriate and high quality facilities; recruiting high quality staff/instructors in remote locations; assessing local Métis needs; and serving regions with a small or dispersed Métis community. Some or all of these challenges are likely the factors at play in the lower ratings of the effectiveness of and satisfaction with community-based delivery of training among faculty and staff

and participants. Partnered delivery with regional colleges can address these challenges in some instances, though the Institute will likely continue to be faced with difficult choices as to where to locate training and of what type. There were also reportedly concerns about maintaining DTI's identity in these partnerships and uneven participation of regional colleges in partnerships.

g) Employment

While not a challenge mentioned specifically by key informants or survey respondents, unemployment rates of participants following program participation are worthy of note. These evaluation data indicate that a substantial portion of DTI ABE and Skills Training participants are currently unemployed and looking for work – about one in five, which is far higher than the provincial unemployment rate. This is perhaps less surprising for DTI ABE participants (who are engaged in a process of upgrading to gain entry to further education) than for DTI Skills Training participants. For some DTI participants, health/disability issues are reported to be barriers to employment. Unfortunately, further analysis is limited by the small sample size, though the data are suggestive that participants' location is a factor (those in the North being less likely to have found employment in the post-program period). Other potential barriers to employment, such as those that may still exist in the workplace, could not be examined within the scope of the current study.

7. SUMMARY OBSERVATIONS

The following are summary observations based on the results of the review of the rationale, delivery and impacts and effectiveness of selected components of GDI components—SUNTEP, DTI ABE and certificate and diploma training, and the Publishing Department. Themes are organized according to the major issues identified for this review.

7.1 RATIONALE

GDI was established in 1980. The SUNTEP program also began at this time as did an institute-wide commitment to Métis cultural research. This was followed later by the establishment of the Dumont Technical Institute (1992) to deliver ABE and Skills Training to Métis students across the province. GDI is the only Métis-owned and directed educational institution in Canada. Evaluation study participants—key informants and faculty and staff—were supportive of the ongoing need for GDI programs, including the SUNTEP, DTI and Publishing Department which were the focus of the study.

Current demographic and economic conditions in Saskatchewan further support the relevance of programming to advance Métis education and employment. The province's Métis population is growing, and is also relatively young. Métis people do not fare well on measures of education, employment and income compared to the non-Aboriginal population in Saskatchewan. As a province currently experiencing labour shortages in many skill areas, the potential of Saskatchewan's Aboriginal workforce to meet labour market demands while benefiting from economic prosperity has become a priority.

Mainstream institutions are not perceived by key informants to be the ideal setting for success for many in the Métis community, and this is confirmed in the literature on best practices in Aboriginal education and learning. GDI's programs, such as DTI and SUNTEP, offer a distinct and welcoming approach to basic and post-secondary education that includes both sound substantive content (DTI's certificate and diploma training, and SUNTEP's Bachelor of Education degree), with a cultural component that is widely perceived to contribute to student retention and success ("a program plus," according to several key informants). According to key informants, GDI has consolidated its role in the Métis community and gained credibility as a long-standing educational institution.

Faculty and staff also support the relevance of GDI's offerings as meeting the needs and interests of Métis learners. While participants themselves were not asked about the relevance of their program to their needs and interests directly, the survey data generally point to satisfaction with the program offerings and supports, though a minority expressed a desire for more intensive programs or greater diversity in programs.

The majority of key informants and GDI faculty and staff expressed few concerns about program overlap or duplication between programs offered by GDI/DTI and other training providers in the province. While ABE programming, and certificate and diploma training are delivered by a number of institutions, GDI programs are noted to have a number of distinguishing features that meet the needs and interests of their particular constituency.

A challenge for DTI is balancing the necessity to meet labour market needs and fulfill its provincial mandate within its current resources. The two directions selected by the Institute in its current strategic plan—health-related occupations and trades-type training—appear to be sensible given labour market demand (though this issue was not examined to any great extent in the evaluation), but these are also expensive programs to deliver. ABE programming also consumes a substantial portion of resources. It can be difficult for the Institute to have a significant presence in all 12 MN—S Regions (mostly achieved through the delivery of ABE programs in all regions) and therefore partnerships are critical to GDI's operations, particularly the delivery of trades training. There is also a challenge in drawing men to the programs: there is an overrepresentation of women among program participants, not only for SUNTEP which is consistent with the elementary teacher emphasis, but also among DTI ABE participants. Greater participation of women in DTI and SUNTEP parallels broader trends in Aboriginal education.

7.2 Design and Delivery

Evaluation study participants were generally satisfied with GDI's current approach to training and education programming and the distinctive design features were perceived to contribute to access, and retention and success of students. The culturally-affirming environment and integration of Métis-specific programming emerge as vitally important thrusts of the Institute and an area where GDI, with the support of its Publishing Department, has been quite effective. Many key informants feel that the safe and welcoming environment at GDI draws students to the Institute who would not otherwise participate in mainstream institutions and thus addresses what participants themselves identify as a key barrier to achieving their goals – lack of educational qualifications/grade 12. The culturally-affirming atmosphere was also an aspect of their program with which GDI participants were very satisfied (eight in ten) and where the perceived benefits of the program are high (eight in ten rated the program very useful in increasing their sense of pride in being Métis).

Accredited training, community-based delivery of training, small class sizes and, to a lesser extent, preparatory training were also noted as positive features of GDI programs by key informants, which lend themselves to providing individual attention to students and flexibility in addressing their needs.

If there is a design feature that merits further attention, it is the support services to students attending programs. The existing supports to students are perceived to be an important factor of success by key informants, though there are delivery challenges in that much programming occurs in communities across the province. The survey data show that a modest portion of students took advantage of support services such as counselling and referrals during their studies (lowest among DTI Skills Training

participants) and this area also received a comparatively lower satisfaction rating in the battery of program attributes. When asked whether there were any gaps in the Institute's current program array, key informant, and faculty and staff comments frequently centred on enhancing student support services, recognizing that this is also a resource issue.

Awareness of GDI programs is perceived by key informants, and faculty and staff to be moderate to high. GDI uses a number of different methods to promote awareness of the Institute and its programs such as Métis Locals and the media. According to participants in GDI programs, word of mouth is the most commonly mentioned source of awareness of their program, particularly among SUNTEP participants. Media ads are a distant second. Seven in ten participants were very satisfied with how easy it was to find out about and apply to DTI/SUNTEP—rated near the middle in a battery of program attributes. Awareness is an area that was perceived as needing modest improvement by key informants, and the issue has received some attention in the Institute's strategic planning sessions as well.

GDI works in collaboration with a number of other government departments and agencies and educational institutions. On the whole, these partnerships—with AEEL, the province's two universities and SIAST—were characterized by key informants as collegial and beneficial. Faculty and staff ratings of these partnerships were also consistent. With respect to the regional colleges, DTI has partnered with some colleges more than others and some not at all. Though much depends on the concentration of the Métis population and their participation in programming, GDI's perspective is that issues around "turf" and control may also be at play. Partnerships with employers are an area where some key informants felt GDI could expand its efforts. There have been some successes partnering with government departments and Crown Corporations, but according to these key informants, partnerships could be extended to other sectors, and existing partnerships (e.g., with school boards, health regions) solidified. In fact, the Institute's smaller size was perceived to lend itself well to providing a rapid and flexible response to employer needs and the current tight labour market offers a positive climate for these partnerships to be initiated.

The Institute's Governance is seen to have advanced considerably in the last two years. During this time, the role of the Board of Governors has evolved from a management board to a policy board, now supported by a number of bylaws around succession planning, conflict of interest and so on. Board members have attended a number of professional development sessions to better understand their roles and responsibilities. Key informants were generally pleased with the current operation and effectiveness of the Board. Where improvements were suggested, these had to do with greater precision and consistency in the way Board members are solicited and selected (e.g., qualifications of Board members, checks and balances).

The relationship between the MN—S and GDI is articulated in the Institute's bylaws. The link is perceived to be an important one. The timing of the evaluation data collection coincided with an MN—S proposal that would see GDI move from affiliate status to a subsidiary of the MN—S. There was little support for the proposal among the key informants who participated in the study, or surveyed GDI faculty and staff. This is an issue of timing (the current government viewed as lacking an entrenched and effective governance model, experience and stability and thus a discussion of a change in the relationship being

premature) and principle (training and education institutions needing to have governance that is autonomous from political bodies). Some argued that the MN—S has an important role to play at the political level as an advocate for GDI and Métis participation in education and employment generally.

Among GDI representatives, and faculty and staff, the Institute's funding is perceived to be only somewhat adequate to meet the needs of students, and to fulfill GDI's provincial mandate. Insufficient operational funding for DTI (in ratio to training program funding and compared to regional colleges) is a particular bone of contention for the Institute. Evaluation participants were of the view that while GDI is making effective use of its current resources, more could be done to address other learner interests, student supports and cultural activities.

7.3 Program Impacts

DTI and SUNTEP participants are generally pleased with their experience in their program—eight in ten say they were very satisfied with their program overall. As mentioned above, the program attributes that received the highest satisfaction rating were the culturally-affirming environment and also the quality of the training. The vast majority would choose the same program if they were to do it over again, and almost all would recommend DTI/SUNTEP to a friend or family member.

Program discontinuation rates are higher for DTI ABE programs compared to the certificate and diploma training programs and SUNTEP—34 per cent compared to 11 and 10 per cent for DTI Skill Training and SUNTEP respectively. The most common reason for discontinuing their program, according to participants, was for family/personal/health reasons.

Participants perceived there to be a number of benefits of their DTI/SUNTEP program including cultural pride and knowledge, motivation and self-confidence, and gaining skills and knowledge for the workplace. Their programs' usefulness in terms of improving their ability to find and keep a job was rated somewhat less useful (and the transition to the workplace was also an area that some key informants mentioned could be a focus for further student support services).

Employment outcomes vary significantly by program—a reflection of the content of the course (upgrading vs. skills/teaching training) and ABE participants being a more complex and multi-barriered client group. About half of DTI ABE graduates have worked (full-time, part-time, self-employed or casual) since completing their program and two in five were working at the time of the survey. However, a substantial proportion—one in three are currently students. The unemployment rate in this group is 26 per cent. While a large majority of DTI certificate and diploma training graduates—over eight in ten—have worked since completing their program, about seven in ten are currently working and two in ten are currently unemployed and looking for work. SUNTEP graduates have the most positive employment outcomes—eight in ten are currently working and most of the remainder are students (four per cent unemployed and looking for work). It should be noted that the survey sample may not be perfectly generalizable to the participant population as a whole, given the modest response rate.

Job quality seems to have improved modestly compared to the pre-program period, with graduates more likely to be employed in higher paying jobs. Wage gains range from $11 an hour for SUNTEP participants to $3 an hour for DTI Skills Training participants. The majority of graduates say that their current job is related to their DTI/SUNTEP program and most say the program was helpful in getting this job to at least some extent. Nineteen per cent are working in positions with little relationship to their DTI/SUNTEP program. One in five program participants went on to other education and training at various institutions in the province following their program. Impacts on work intensity and draw on social assistance are difficult to detect given the small sample size.

7.4 Strengths and Challenges

Evaluation participants identified many strengths of GDI. The cultural component drew particular praise, as well as the quality and dedication of staff and Board members. Other strengths included aspects of the program model such as student supports, community-based delivery of training, flexibility and responsiveness and credibility of the Institute.

The most important reported challenge of the Institute is funding, which impacts an array of issues from sufficient programming to meet the needs of Métis learners and current students to facility issues to the ability of the Institute to operate smoothly and strategically and attract high quality staff. In terms of its programming, GDI was perceived to offer a generally sound spectrum of programs and services given its resources. There are some challenges in terms of gaps in programs and services, however, as well as a desire by some to expand the cultural education component. Governance of the Institute is perceived to be both a strength and a challenge—while recognizing that the Institute has made significant strides in this area, key informants recommended continued attention and vigilance in this area. While there was a high degree of confidence in the management at GDI, there were also some organizational challenges that were mentioned (e.g., internal communications) — also linked to funding constraints and the recent and rapid growth of the Institute following signing of the AHRDA. There is also a need and desire for additional management supports such as a student information system. Finally, there were some additional suggestions to further efforts in the area of marketing solidify and expand partnerships.

APPENDIX A
EVALUATION QUESTIONS

a) Rationale

1. To what extent are SUNTEP and DTI (ABE and related programs and skills training programs) relevant to the needs of the current labour market?
2. To what extent is the program array (SUNTEP and DTI) aligned with students' interests? To what extent are programs over or under-subscribed?
3. To what extent does the atmosphere at GDI promote cultural affirmation and repatriation as well as a supportive environment for: learners? Graduates? Métis people?
4. To what extent does the current governance structure support effective outcomes related to: leadership administration; and program outcomes?
5. To what extent is the selection process and composition of the GDI Board of Governors: representative; and open and transparent.
6. To what extent is the GDI Board of Governors: effective; appropriate; clear in its mandate and policy direction; and supportive of management and staff.
7. To what extent is the relationship between the GDI and the MN--S: effective, appropriate, clear in its mandate and policy direction; supportive of management and staff?
8. What are the potential benefits and risks/drawbacks of a proposal to move GDI from an affiliate of the MN--S to a subsidiary?[29]
9. To what extent does the current management structures support effective outcomes related to: effective leadership; administration; and programs.
10. To what extent does AEEL support effective outcomes related to: effective leadership; operations; and programs (SUNTEP and DTI)
11. To what extent is the array of services available to students effective, relevant and appropriate? SUNTEP; ABE and related programs; skills training.
12. To what extent does current funding levels meet identified program and service need? Support a positive learning and cultural environment? Meet program and cultural demands? How do students fund their learning programs? SUNTEP, ABE and related programs, skills training.
13. What efforts are made by GDI, its partners, and AEEL to make Métis people aware of programs and services available through GDI?

[29] This question was added during the research design phase of the project.

b) Design and Delivery

14. Does the design and delivery of the programs reflect the intent of GDI's mission, objectives and targeted outcomes (SUNTEP, ABE and related programs, skills training)?
15. To what extent are partnerships effective: other training and education providers (e.g., SIAST, regional colleges, universities, SIIT, SATCC, etc.)? Employers?
16. How flexible and responsive is the program design and delivery in meeting participants' academic and personal needs? (SUNTEP, ABE and related programs, skills training).
17. How well does GDI integrate Métis-specific resources and traditional knowledge within training and education programs?
18. To what extent do participants achieve program outcomes (SUNTEP, ABE and related programs, skills training)? Why are individuals successful? Not successful? What is the attrition rate? What are the main reasons students leave?
19. To what extent has economic self-sufficiency (i.e., finding/maintaining employment) been impacted? (SUNTEP, ABE and related programs, skills training). To what extent has the amount and source of completers'/graduates' incomes changed? To what extent are participants independent of public income support post-program? To what extent are graduates/completers/non-completers satisfied with their current employment situation?
20. To what extent did the program lead to improved quality of life (e.g., increased self-confidence and self-esteem etc.) for participants?
21. How satisfied are participants with the programs' quality and delivery?
22. To what extent does GDI support transitions to employment?
23. How satisfied are employers with employability, work readiness and jobs skills in: LPN Program, SUNTEP, Apprenticeships, Sask Energy program?
24. Are there any unintended impacts (positive or negative) of the SUNTEP, and DTI programs? If so, what are they? Are there any unintended impacts of the Publishing program? If so, what are they?

c) Alternatives/Promising Practices

25. Are there alternative ways of delivering similar culturally specific programs? If so, how do the outcomes compare GDI?
26. What lessons learned emerge?
27. What promising practices emerge? (cultural, education and training)